

Man Through the Ages

Yefim Chernyak

Ambient Conflicts

Chapters
from the History of Relations
between Countries
with Different Social Systems



Progress Publishers

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Translated from the Russian by Vic Schneierson



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**Из истории взаимоотношений государств с
различным социальным строем**

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IN LIEU OF A FOREWORD

In this final quarter of the 20th century the survival of all nations depends on whether the forces of progress manage to shift the historically unavoidable struggle between the two social systems on to a plane that will rule out a destructive nuclear war. That is why the Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist community are seeking to consolidate the Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence in international relations. Their consistently peaceful foreign policy is consonant with the vital interests of all people on Earth.

Already in its Decree on Peace the first foreign policy document adopted immediately after the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the Soviet government acted upon the idea of peaceful coexistence. It called for an end to the imperialist First World War, and for peaceful relations on a democratic basis between states of a different class type—the Republic of Soviets and the capitalist countries. In October 1917 the victorious proletariat in Russia declared that peace must not be a more or less short cease-fire between wars but a normal state of society, and that deliverance of mankind from wars was the supreme aim of Soviet foreign policy.

Soviet foreign policy works for a lasting, and durable peace of which the finest minds of humanity have dreamed down the ages and which is the hope of all nations—the peace of which Dante Alighieri wrote at the dawn of the Renaissance, which Erasmus, the thinker and humanist, called for so passionately, and which Jean Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant sought to achieve by means of the plans (even though utopian) which they set forth in their treatises. The Soviet policy of peace reflects the eternal aspirations of the peoples, of the working people first of all, who

had always suffered most from the ravages of war. It reflects, too, their ineradicable faith in a better future.

In modern times, Lenin's theory of peaceful coexistence has been carried forward step by step, gaining new content. In the interim between the first and second world wars, it was aimed at lengthening the intervals between armed conflicts, the breathing spaces of peace, to the maximum. Specifically, this meant that the Soviet Union acted to prevent the capitalist powers from ganging up against it, to breach the imperialist economic blockade, and to expand Soviet commercial and cultural ties with other countries. But when a bloc of fascist powers emerged in the latter half of the 1930s, the fight for peaceful coexistence was centred on organising collective rebuff to the aggressors.

To be faithful to the principle of peaceful coexistence in our day means to steadily follow a policy of strengthening international security and countering imperialism's aggressive forces which are trying to scuttle the system of international agreements that has enabled mankind to avoid a worldwide nuclear catastrophe in the well over four decades since World War II.

Peaceful coexistence is a crucial factor of social progress in the current era. The deeper the roots of peaceful coexistence, the more difficult it will be for reactionaries to intensify the arms race with pleas of a "Soviet threat" and the harder for them to speculate on the patriotic sentiment of the masses and pose as defenders of national interests, to suppress progressives in their own countries by portraying them as subversive elements, as friends of the enemy, and to conduct undeclared wars and organise counter-revolutionary interventions against those developing countries which follow a peaceful anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist policy.

For the socialist countries the policy of peaceful coexistence is a built-in element of their social system. For them continuous international tension means using up a considerable part of their resources to buttress defences so that, if need be, an imperialist

aggression is successfully repulsed. Such a use of resources prevents them from utilising the advantages of the socialist system to the fullest in peaceful construction and from concentrating all available means on the fullest satisfaction of the material and spiritual requirements of the mass of the people, on speeding up the building and improvement of the socialist society.

Peaceful coexistence is in no way aimed at interfering in the internal affairs of any other country. It refers exclusively to the sphere of international relations and establishes rules of conduct among states in the world arena. It is tied in closely with the right of every nation to decide by itself on its social and political arrangements. Consistent observance of the principle of peaceful coexistence is, indeed, called upon to ensure the right of the mass of the people to chart its own destiny and settle all internal affairs without outside interference or, in short, to be master in its own house. The principle of peaceful coexistence envisages a world order under which any change of a social and political nature within individual countries will not upset the basic relations in the world arena, will not lead to wars or efforts to export counter-revolution, and will not imperil world peace.

The policy of the Soviet Union and of the entire socialist community is aimed at shifting the historically inevitable struggle between the socialist and capitalist worlds on to a plane that does not involve war and reposes on a scientific knowledge of objective social laws and of how they operate in our era, on a profoundly realistic appreciation of the current tendencies. This policy, the only sensible one, is encountering bitter resistance from the more bellicose and reckless imperialist groups.

Throughout the 1970s and in the early half of the 80s, the enemies of detente have looked for ideological, economic, political, and other arguments to justify a return to cold war. In their battle against the forces of progress, imperialist ideologists are seeking to adapt their anti-communist dogmas to the changed world situation, to find more refined argu-

ments and invent more credible quasi-scientific theories that would make an impact on people's consciousness.

Among the Western arguments we come upon references to previous long-drawn-out international conflicts.

If the many pronouncements of reactionary Western politicians, politologists and historians concerning long-drawn-out international conflicts, sometimes called ambient conflicts, were collected under one head, they would read as follows:

1. Ambient conflicts are, as the reactionary politicians would have it, a form of everlasting struggle between the "good" embodied in the forces of reaction and the "evil" embodied in their adversaries.

2. Ambient conflicts, as these politicians see it, even serve as a means of combating international anarchy. The only way they can be resolved is by armed force. The only way they can be blunted is by the two hostile camps renouncing ideological struggle. Certain Western theorists hold, indeed, that the system of international relations can be made relatively stable if they are not ideologised (what they mean, in fact, is that foreign policy is shaped not only by the objective of defending the interests of the state but also, and even more, by that of furthering ideological aims—the spread to other countries of the sole "true" religion, of certain political arrangements, and the like). In so doing, they equate ideological motivations of the behaviour of states on the international scene with the ideology that justifies the spurious necessity for cold war or even armed confrontation between states with different social systems, that is, the subordination of foreign policy to the sole aim of securing victory in such a confrontation. Hans Morgenthau, a US politologist, wrote in 1974, for example, that "the rigidity of alignments which was characteristic of the Cold War was a function not only of the intractability of substantive political issues but also of the irreconcilable nature of the ideological positions"¹. Robert F. Randle, who wrote

¹ Hans J. Morgenthau, "The New Diplomacy of Movement", in *Encounter*, August 1974, p. 53.

a book about how wars ended and peace was made in the past five hundred years, also considers deideologisation one of the chief conditions for the disappearance of armed conflicts¹.

3. Reactionary politicians maintain that the ambient conflicts could be blunted lastingly if fundamental unilateral concessions were made by one of the sides, namely, the progressive side. But in that case, too, they allege, peace and order is disrupted by revolutionary changes in the social and political system of separate countries with the result that the system of international relations as a whole is deformed. Richard Pipes, the well-known reactionary historian, wrote, for example, that peaceful coexistence between the USA and the USSR was impossible unless cardinal changes occurred in the Soviet pattern.² In 1981, Pipes, who was then associated with the National Security Council, stated that if the Soviet Union did not renounce the socialist ideology, a third world war would be unavoidable. This concept was made the basis for so-called Directive 75 signed by the US President in March 1983, envisaging interference in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union with the object of decisively altering the balance of power in favour of the United States³.

4. Past history, reactionary scholars hold, shows that peace can be attained through the arms race, through the assertion of US leadership in the capitalist world, through a policy "from positions of strength" on the part of the West, through counter-revolutionary interventions, through attempts at compelling the socialist countries to radically alter their social and political system.

But are those really the lessons of past history? This book endeavours to answer that question. But

¹ Robert F. Randle, *The Origins of Peace. A Study of Peacemaking and the Structure of Peace Settlements*, Free Press, New York, 1973, p. 12.

² Richard Pipes, "Mr X Revises. A Reply to George F. Kennan", in *Encounter*, April 1978, pp. 18-21.

³ *Pravda*, March 18, 1983.

one remark before we begin. A scientific approach is absolutely essential when turning to past experience. Superficial historical parallels drawn between heterogeneous phenomena and based on outwardly similar (or allegedly similar) features that are not determining as regards their essence, are null and void because unscientific. "If you cite an historical parallel," Lenin wrote, "you must single out and point out exactly what is similar in the different events; if not, what you get will not be an historical comparison but words cast to the winds."¹ So since we aim to consider the actual lessons of history, we should first of all define the content of the very concept of long-drawn-out international confrontations or ambient conflicts. As we see it, an ambient conflict is an ideological contest that reflects collisions of more or less the same class character in different countries. An ambient conflict could mean the extension of such an ideological contention to the sphere of inter-state relations and its development into an armed confrontation, with the involved countries representing the interests of the different classes that have collided in this struggle. Last but not least, the concept of ambient conflict may be applied to drawn-out collisions between groups of states belonging to different regions, with the clash of ideologies acquiring considerable prominence.

All these three types of conflict may occur within the framework of one and the same socio-economic system or during the transition from one social system to another. But while the first two types originate from the internal contradictions of this transition in a specific region, the third type is a clash between societies that have attained different stages of development and belong to different systems. We intend to examine these three types of conflict here, but will devote priority attention to the first and second types, and to the consequences they entail for the countries that became involved in armed collisions.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Those Who Would Liquidate Us", *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, p. 74.

HOLY THRONE AND HOLY EMPIRE

Our era began in the year to which Christian tradition ascribes the birth of Jesus Christ. That year, even though conventionally, could also be considered the beginning of an ambient conflict that stretched over several centuries in the history of the Mediterranean countries and those of a large part of Europe, thus exercising no small influence on the destiny of mankind as a whole. To the Pax Romana the early Christians counterposed the idea of a Messianic peace, the waiting for the return of Christ. To peace through force (serving justice, as asserted the official ideology of the Roman Empire) there was counterposed peace through peace, through universal reconciliation in Christ.

How did that conflict originate? The Evangelist cites Jesus replying as follows when asked whether the emperor (Caesar) should be paid a tribute, that is, taxes established by the Roman authorities: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (St Matthew, XXII, 21). To be sure, direct hints that the struggle with the Empire was inevitable and irreconcilable occur already in the pronouncements of Jesus to his disciples that he had brought not peace but the sword to Earth: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake" (St Matthew, X, 22). But the Gospel abounds in contradictions and mutually exclusive statements. For centuries, theologians have maintained that in their opinion there had been

an irreconcilable conflict between the new religion and the Roman Empire.

The apparent paradox was that while Christianity was really an antagonist of Rome, the new teaching was tolerated by the Romans, and the persecution did not start until it began rapidly ripening for alliance with the Empire. But this paradox is easily explained: while Rome was strong, it could afford to spurn Christianity, and see it as one of many sects which the authorities considered harmful as carriers of superstitions (that is, beliefs differing from the religions acknowledged by the state), but not dangerous.

That the metamorphosis was possible derived from the fact that Christianity was a religious ideology. The true earthly aspirations of the enslaved, oppressed, and rightless were expressed by it in a mystical manner that could in due course be filled with an entirely different class content. And the fact that Christianity wrote *finis* to hopes for a better life on the sinful Earth and that it promised salvation in the next world, in heaven, paved the way from the outset for its transformation into an instrument of the spiritual suppression of the masses by the power-holders, an instrument that blunted or obliterated the popular anger and any thought of resisting the oppressors.

Who, then, was the victor in the conflict between Christianity and the Roman Empire, a conflict that dragged out for at least two centuries, if not for three or four. The Church, and with it the bourgeois science of history, considered the answer to that question self-evident. Was not the victory of the cross proved by the fact that Christianity became for many many centuries the dominant religion in dozens of countries? And by the fact, too, that Rome itself became the centre of the new religion?

But the answer is not really as unequivocal as it may appear on the surface. It presupposes, first, that the victorious Christianity of the 4th century was the same original Christianity that had sprung up two or three centuries before. But this identity is doubtful even if we consider religious tradition: for origi-

nally Christianity had not the slightest trace of the powerful hierarchically structured organisation named the Church, which, in fact, did secure victory. But if we take the real earthly basis of religion, the Christianity of the late 1st and the 2nd centuries and the Christianity of the 4th century were antipodes in many respects. Furthermore, could there be any question of victory in a conflict which saw the Church enter into the service of the very power against which it had fought? At best, the victory amounted to the Church imposing itself as a servant upon the Empire (or, more precisely, convincing it in the need for resorting to its help, the help of a recently persecuted adversary).

There is still less ground, however, to speak of any victory of the Roman Empire, though, in the final analysis, it had made its former enemy serve its ends. The alliance of the Church and the Empire did not avert the inevitable downfall of Rome as a result of the downfall of slavery and the transition to the new, feudal, social system. The substance of the conflict between Christianity and Rome changed in step with the changes that occurred in Christianity and in the Empire, and the means of resolving it were determined by the antagonists' difference in "type", one being the Church as the embodiment of a new religion, and the other being a secular state. The grounds for compromise, even alliance, existed, among other things, in the fact that no territorial demarcation of their possessions was required for such an agreement, that they coexisted within one and the same realm, and that they jointly exploited its population.

While locked in struggle with Rome, Christianity had had to face up to yet another conflict. Not only Palestine but the entire East was teeming with founders of religions. Christianity, which addressed itself to all nations without distinction, came out victorious and became a world religion. And all world religions were, in fact, the protective ideologies of definite social systems of antagonistic classes.

Early Christianity censured coercion in matters of faith. The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians (I Cor., VIII, 12) warns against such coercion.

Despite the rigid discipline of the early communities, the Church, at least formally, deemed it unfit to punish the wayward, let alone sentence them to death. Paul said in so many words that the “weapons of our warfare are not carnal” (II Cor., X, 4). But the future belonged to those who favoured a forcible consolidation of orthodoxy.

Barely had the persecution of Christians ended when the Church itself became a persecutor. Having reconciled itself with the State of Rome, it became doubly irreconcilable towards Roman (more precisely Graeco-Roman) culture, save those of its elements which it used as additional props of the new religion.

The dragon of paganism was licked, but only after it had for nearly three hundred years assailed and assaulted Christianity. The victory was complete and consummate, wrote Frederic William Farrar, the 19th-century English historian. But if we consider the conflict as a mere collision between Christianity and paganism, then the “complete and consummate” victory was extremely limited in both geographical and chronological terms. After all, the greater part of the known world, especially Asia and Africa, were outside the sphere of Christian influence. In the early 7th century, Christianity was superseded by Islam in most of Asia Minor, on the coast of Northern Africa, and certain other regions.

Can the conflict between Christianity and Rome be referred to as an international conflict? Did it not unfold within the borders of one state? That state did not embrace, as historians once wrote, the main part of the world then known to the Mediterranean peoples (information is at hand about their ties with India and other distant lands), but was still a specific and immense world, the intrinsic ties between whose parts were incomparably more important than sporadic contacts with other regions.

Some ambient conflicts are, after all, border cases between internal and external. And the conflict between Christianity and the Roman Empire was just such a conflict. It reflected not only the class struggle within the Roman Empire as a whole, but also the

striving of conquered peoples for independence, which became inevitably intertwined with Rome's struggle against its external foes both in Asia Minor and in Europe.

The Christian Church (churches, more precisely) participated in most, if not all, the ambient conflicts of the past nearly two millennia, first as one of the main antagonists, and later as a subsidiary but always considerable and influential force. In so doing, the Church always relied on the experience of its first conflict, for it was then that its Christian tradition took shape, with both the legendary and the true founders of the then new religion participating in the clash. Appealing to that experience, interpreting it in the most favourable way, the Church at the same time mobilised all the moral prestige of the Christian tradition against its adversaries in conflicts of an entirely different time. The Evangelical narratives had for centuries been habitual from childhood, taking the form of instructions and hopes, and shaping political sympathies and hates. The great artists of the Renaissance and the finest writers in different countries of the world were deeply fond of them. They were an object of scientific search, apologetic treatises, original hypotheses, and sensational conjectures. At all times people argued and judged of their problems and needs through the prism of Evangelical legends. But the interest which Evangelical history aroused also among people far removed from religion reflected more than just the topical events. That interest sprang from moral search, from a yearning for justice wherever Pontius Pilates and Judases were bred by the nature of life in society and from a striving to pinpoint the reasons for the world's evils.

The conflict between the Empire and the Christian Church projected itself in the conflict between the Empire and the barbarian world, different parts of which adjoined the different theological schools that had sprung from the endless dogmatic controversies of the 4th century.

In the Middle Ages the Catholic Church was the international centre of the feudal system. Despite internal wars, it united all Western Europe into one

big political whole which opposed both the Greek Orthodox and the Mohammedan worlds.

In the 7th century, with the inception of Islam, the struggle between that new world religion and Christianity swiftly grew into an armed conflict between the most powerful states of that time. Throughout the 7th and the early 8th centuries, the Arabs, carrying the banner of Islam, occupied the greater part of Asia Minor and the Mediterranean coast of Africa, and took possession of Spain, but then suffered defeat in the battle at Poitiers in Southern France and retreated behind the Pyrenees. Arthur Koestler, a Western author who had won notoriety as an anti-communist, tried to portray that conflict through the use of a cold war vocabulary. "At the beginning of the eighth century," he wrote, "the world was polarized between the two superpowers representing Christianity and Islam. Their ideological doctrines were welded to power-politics pursued by the classical methods of propaganda, subversion and military conquest."¹ Need I say that such mechanical parallels and anachronisms only obscure, rather than explain, the substance of the matter.

The chief antagonists in the conflict between Christianity and Islam were the Byzantine Empire and the Arab Caliphate. Only gradually did the centre of the Christian camp shift to Western Europe.

At the close of the 11th century, the religious conflict again invaded the sphere of inter-state relations between the countries of Europe and Asia Minor. The crusades began, rooted deeply in the socio-economic development of Western Europe. They were, indeed, one of the most important factors shaping the system of international relations. Reasonably, the struggle between the Empire and the papacy left a strong imprint on the crusades, which were apprehended by their contemporaries chiefly as a contention between Christianity and Islam; the calls of the papacy to liberate the Holy Sepulchre were indissolubly linked

¹ Arthur Koestler, *The Thirteenth Tribe. The Khazar Empire and Its Heritage*, Random House, New York, 1976, p. 58.

with Rome's claims to supreme power over the Western world.

Even in the early years of the Renaissance, at the close of the Middle Ages, Europeans did not yet see that the Western Roman Empire had ceased to exist a thousand years before; the Holy Roman Empire which comprised mainly the Germanic states was, as before, considered its direct successor.

Back in the 5th and 6th centuries, the works of Christian writers, sermons, and the resolutions of ecumenical councils created a new image of Rome as the fourth and last monarchy predicted by the prophet Daniel, which would be replaced by the Kingdom of God. The ideas of the Pax Romana and of Christian peace gradually merged. Prayers were said for the welfare of Rome. God was depicted patron of the Empire, and the Empire became the synonym of Christianity. (After the collapse of the Western Roman Empire this manner of thought survived in Byzantium.)

Pope Leo I, known as the Great (440-461), declared that the Roman Church reaffirmed and renewed the universal mission of the Roman Empire. And a few decades later, St Gelasius I (492-496) proclaimed the supremacy of the Roman Pope, to whom monarchs were accountable. To be sure, these pretensions came too early, and were speeded by the disintegration of the Western Roman Empire.

In the following century, after Italy had for a short time been subordinate to Byzantium, Pope Gregory I (590-604) depicted the Empire as the external expression of the universal claims of Christianity; that is why, he said, it would exist until the end of time. But the Church also had a spiritual mission that transcended the borders of the Empire. The Empire bore the function not only of ensuring peace within the Church, but also of winning pagans for Christianity.

The pretensions of the papacy served notice of its future contention with the Holy Roman Empire. Western historians, especially German ones, have written volumes about the struggle of the papacy and the empire. Old literature which concentrated mainly, if not exclusively, on the political side of

that struggle, showed it as a clash of two forces whose control extended in one way or another to many countries. Only gradually, under the growing influence of Marxist historiography, scholars began studying the socio-economic reasons for the struggle, especially the participation in it of the rich Lombardian cities and the class composition of the parties siding with the Empire or the papacy in these Italian communities. Some historians even considered the Italian cities a third independent force, whose role was steadily increasing.

The class struggle in the communities was, for a long time to come, still described as a conflict between Guelphs and Ghibellines (followers of the Pope and the emperor) when few still remembered that these words had originated from an Italian corruption of the names of the Bavarian dukes of Welf and of the Weiblingen Castle, which gave the second appellation to the House of Hohenstaufen.

The ideological forms of any conflict between social systems are later partly used in the conflict within social systems (or vice versa). That is just what happened with the conflict between Christianity and the Roman Empire and the subsequent conflict between the papacy and the Holy Roman Empire in the Middle Ages. In that medieval conflict neither side expressed any progressive tendencies in the development of West European society, though the forces that were bearers of these tendencies (especially in the cities of Northern Italy) often made common cause, as I have already said, with one of the belligerent camps.

At the end of the 15th century, people began calling the Empire the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. Hardly in tribute to the nascent German national self-consciousness. It was rather an admission of its losing headmanship over Italy and of the waning hope of gaining all-European hegemony. The plans of a universal empire, it is true, were soon renewed, but this time on a different basis only formally related to the rivalry between the Empire and the papacy of the preceding centuries (of which more later).

In the latest West German historical studies, the Holy Roman Empire is mostly portrayed as a supra-national state based on the religious and political identity of Western Europe, whereas in fact it was nothing more than an attempt at founding such a universal power. West German historians tend to deny that the struggle for hegemony against the papacy had had a negative effect on Germany's destiny, that it had contributed to Germany's subsequent territorial disintegration. They maintain contrary to the facts that the struggle had had a beneficial effect on European civilisation¹.

Divided Europe

At just about that time, says an old legend, Frederick III, Duke of Saxony, saw an extraordinary dream. He saw the friar Martin Luther writing on the Schlosskirche (the castle church) in Wittenberg, and in such a bold hand and so clearly that he, Frederick, could read the inscription from Schweinitz. And then he saw the pen that the friar had used begin to grow until it finally reached Rome and brushed against the Pope's tiara, making it wobble on the pontiff's head. Here Duke Frederick wanted to stretch out his hand and grasp the pen ... and woke up.

Frederick's dream was truly extraordinary. It had obviously been induced by the story of how Martin Luther, an Augustinian friar, had on October 31, 1517, nailed his famous 95 theses against the sale of indulgences on the door of the Schlosskirche in Wittenberg on the eve of All Saints' Day. But, alas, repeated a countless number of times in more than three centuries, the story will evidently remain just another of many historical legends. The first to tell it had presumably been a contemporary of Luther's, a close associate of his in fact, Johannes Schneider of

¹ E.g., Heinz Löwe, "Kaisertum und Abendland in ottonischer und frühsalischer Zeit", in *Historische Zeitschrift*, No. 3, Vol. 196, 1963; cf. A. F. Kolesnitsky, *The Holy Roman Empire: Claims and Reality*, Moscow, 1977, pp. 9-15, 192 (in Russian).

Eisleben, who was said to have specially emphasised that he could testify to the truth of the matter. But the word testify is more likely to have derived from an incorrect reading of a Latin word which, in fact, meant "moderate" (referring to the form in which Luther worded his theses). What is more, a study of Schneider's manuscript leads to an unexpected discovery: it says nothing of the mid-day or even of the 31st of October, 1517, or yet of the Schlosskirche. Luther himself, too, does not mention the famous scene of his nailing his theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg in any of his numerous works and letters or, for that matter, in his autobiography. Perhaps he felt no need for mentioning an episode that everybody already knew about? But that is exactly the point—no one ever mentioned the episode, that dramatic beginning of the Reformation, during Luther's lifetime. It was first related by Philipp Melanchthon, an ideologue of Protestantism, in his preface to the second volume of Luther's works that appeared soon after their author's death.

In October 1517, Melanchthon himself had been in Tübingen, not Wittenberg, and, in general, committed no few obvious errors in his preface. The latest research shows that on October 31, 1517, Luther dispatched his theses to Albert of Brandenburg, the archbishop of Mainz, and one other prelate. These two, who had a stake in maintaining the old practices, did not deign to reply to Luther and handed his theses to one Johann Tetzel, a Dominican friar, who started a polemics against the theses even before they were published in January 1518. In 1517, I might only add, Luther's plans envisaged reform of the Church and restriction of the Pope's authority, and did not go half as far as the Protestant legend would have us believe.

But what about Frederick's extraordinary dream that gave the Duke of Saxony a clear glimpse of the as yet unpublished theses? The most noteworthy point in that legend, I would say, is that the duke's wish to grasp Luther's pen had pursued him even in his sleep. The wish, after all, as an Eastern saying goes, is not only father to the thought but also the

main source of visionary dreams. A ripe social need had seized the thoughts of the Wittenberg theologian, had conquered his doubts and banished hesitation, imparting insuperable force to his denials of the Pope's right to distribute the treasures of the Church. From the outset, the Reformation also objectively undermined the pillars of the old social system. Before coming to grips with secular feudalism in each country, it had been essential to destroy its central organisation, the Catholic Church¹.

A new, turbulent era began in the history of the European continent. Luther rejected the Catholic teaching of grace according to which man won God's beneficence by external acts, affinity with the Church, receipt of the sacraments, gifts to the Church, and charity. Calvinism consolidated this rejection by its dogma of predestination, saying that God had destined certain souls to salvation, others to damnation, and that nothing they did could alter destiny. This doctrine, as we know, was a religious expression of the temporal fact that in the new, bourgeois society the individual's fate was determined by the operation of powerful, unknown and uncontrollable economic forces. It is easy to see that the doctrine of grace was one of the chief targets of Protestant criticism, but only the ambient conflict psychology could prompt theologian Nikolaus von Amsdorf to announce for all to hear in 1559 the proposition that good deeds were damaging to bliss and that this proposition "was true to the spirit of Christianity".

Calvinism, indeed, was the ideology that suited the interests of the bourgeoisie best of all in the era of the so-called initial accumulation. "Calvin saw Government where Luther had only seen Dogma," wrote the astute Honoré de Balzac in his *About Catherine de Medici*. "Where the burly, beer-drinking, uxorious German fought with the Devil, flinging his inkstand at the fiend, the man of Picardy, frail and unmarried, dreamed of plans of campaign, of direct-

¹ See Frederick Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific", in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. Three, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 106.

ing battles, of arming princes, and of raising whole nations by disseminating republican doctrines in the hearts of the middle classes, so as to make up, by increased progress in the Spirit of Nations, for his constant defeats on the battlefield."

Each convert took the oath to comply and to promote compliance with the Gospel as Calvinists interpreted it. Within the borders of the countries in which they preached the Calvinists tried to build a strong organisation. In France, for example, they established a network of congregations led by pastors, teachers of young people, and deacons, whose duty it was to care for the destitute and to oversee morals. The congregations came under the National Synod, which was made up of the more influential Huguenot pastors and laymen. In some countries, especially France, the Calvinist movement was also, alongside the bourgeoisie, joined by a sizeable part of the nobility. Unlike the bourgeoisie, which had for years opposed feudal anarchy and advocated a strong central government, and now only wanted to replace the king's authority with its own, the nobility were out to disrupt the attained unity of the country and to regain their previous status of semi-independent lords of large areas. It was this, indeed, that attracted the landed magnates of Southern France whose fathers had had a generous taste of the Renaissance, to the austere and ascetic Calvinist teaching.

Calvin flung the gates of the monasteries wide open not for the friars to leave them but to drive the whole world into them. Geneva became a sombre monastery in its own right, for Calvin was at the head of its government from 1541 on. His specially trusted intimates placed one and all under the strictest surveillance; in each city quarter agents watched over the townsmen's compliance with the prohibitions that extended to all areas of life and rigidly regulated all trivia, from liberties or luxuries in clothing to music and festivities. A far-flung spy system, encouragement of denunciations, and fierce punishments for the least sign of disobedience—brutal torture and “qualified” executions—became a method of government. Under Calvin's teaching, punishment of the

non-guilty was preferable to the non-punishment of the guilty. The terrorism applied equally to the nobility and the patrician opposition and to commoner ideologues who sided with the more radical currents of the Reformation. Certainly, Calvin's systemic approach to and elaboration of the bourgeois trend in the Reformation, shot through as it was with intolerance, negating any and all compromises, largely helped turn the clash between Catholicism and Protestantism into an ambient conflict. Calvin was eager to make Geneva the ideological capital of Protestantism; he trained priests for many other countries, and published religious literature for dissemination in various parts of Europe.

Bourgeois historians, who have long since chosen to attack the traditional conception of the Renaissance as a great progressive era in world history, acknowledge the tenacity of "old" views. "Myth," writes British historian Robert Nisbet, for example, "is powerful, often, as I think in the case of this myth, ineradicable."¹

The Renaissance is one of the biggest progressive events in world history. The sameness of the social roots of humanism and of the burgher Reformation is quite apparent, but it is no less apparent that externally they are the ideological alternatives of the transitional era. It is also apparent that the human values cherished by humanism, its anti-clericalism and its tendency towards religious toleration, coupled with an as yet indistinct libertinism, worship of man's earthly nature and of the earthly joys of living, the cult of beauty and talent, and its championing the right to unrestricted scientific endeavour—all this was contrary to the spirit of Protestantism, though originally the latter did at times don a humanitarian cloak in its denunciations of the abuses practised by the Catholic priesthood.

Those were only seeming alternatives. Humanism could not be the ideological banner of social movements in an era when the mass consciousness was per-

¹ Robert Nisbet, "The Myth of the Renaissance", in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Cambridge, Vol. 15, No. 4, October 1973, p. 492.

meated with religion. All it could do was make an imprint on the movement of the Reformation. And what prevented it from doing so was the outbreak of an ambient conflict—this being one of the main reasons why European social thinking of the 16th and the early half of the 17th century developed in zigzags. But about that later.

A Mirage

The beginning of the 16th century saw the dawning of the capitalist era. The great geographical discoveries blazed the way to new worlds for the Europeans, undermining the medieval notions of man and the Universe. It was a time that saw the foundations being laid for world trade, for the passage from artisan production to batch manufacturing, the latter offering the tremendous advantages of the division of labour. The decades of the luxuriant flowering of the vivid and many-coloured culture of the Renaissance saw the Catholic Church lose its centuries of supremacy in all spheres of spiritual life. The gradual emergence of the new bourgeois society was marked by an abrupt aggravation of the class struggle.

The increased oppression of the feudal lords was countered by powerful popular movements that grew over into peasant wars. Risings of the city plebs multiplied in number. Royalty became the impulse for a regrouping of social forces. Supported by the town folk, it mounted an offensive against feudal fragmentation. France, England, Spain and a number of other European countries grew into large nation-states. But the old system was in no mood for relinquishing its positions in the economy, in social and political affairs, in the fields of ideology and culture. This was also strongly reflected in inter-state relations.

It is safe to say that the ambient conflicts of those days, of past transitional eras in world history, were reminiscent in certain ways of the modern confrontation between social systems in the world arena. Walter Petry, a present-day West European historian, may have some doubtful passages in his book, *Irr-*

wege Europas 1519-1648, but was quite right in saying that "the 130 years between the election of the Emperor in 1519, when Germany decided in favour of Hapsburg Spain against France, and the Westphalian Peace show many resemblances with the times that we have recently lived through. Political and religious ideas came into bitter collision, racial wars were mercilessly fought, a large state tried to establish a world power and finished up defeated after decades of war from which it never recovered."¹

The beginning of the Reformation coincided with the election to the throne of the Holy Roman Empire of Charles V, who succeeded to the crown of four dynasties, those of Burgundy, Austria, Castile and Aragon; later, his heirs acquired sovereignty over Hungary, Bohemia and Portugal—and this not counting the enormous colonial possessions in the newly-discovered continent of America, where just at this time the Spanish *conquistadores* were over-running vast tracts of land, and also in Africa and Asia. With the imperial title came enormous prestige—out of all proportion with the actual authority wielded by the head of the Holy Roman Empire. This traditional prestige was by itself no mean factor in the Hapsburgs' struggle for hegemony in Europe. Outwardly, Charles V was a far cry from the strong and resolute giant on horseback depicted by the fawning artists of his day. He was an ugly little man with a pimply skin and a forever half-open mouth—a physical fault which he concealed by means of a short beard. Out of the emperor's propensities, his contemporaries singled out gluttony, which had even prompted the Pope, as a sign of benevolence, to relieve him of fasting before confession, and which brought on early haemorrhoids and gout. This was coupled with a fondness for tales about knights-in-armour, in which he fancied himself as a hero, and for flowers and choral singing.

Consolidating imperial authority was for Charles V not only a goal but also a means of attaining his

¹ Walter Petry, *Irrwege Europas 1519-1648*, Muster-schmidt Verlag, Göttingen, 1967, p. 11.

cherished dream of a universal monarchy to succeed ancient Rome and Charlemagne's empire. Deliberately, Charles V tried to impart a supra-national quality to his throne; he did not stress its Spanish foundation and the link between his plans of a universal monarchy with the Castile tradition of crusades against the Moors. A contemporary poet who had taken part in Charles's wars against France, defined this scheme of a worldwide monarchy as "one monarch, one empire, one sword". When seeking election as emperor of the German nation, Charles V wrote in a confidential letter that he would thereby gain considerable possibilities: "We will be able to accomplish many good and great things, and not only conserve and guard the possessions which God has given us, but increase them greatly and, in this way, give peace, repose and tranquillity to Christendom, upholding and strengthening our holy Catholic faith which is our principal foundation."¹

Mercurino Gattinara, his grand chancellor, wrote to Charles that he had authority over the whole world, for it was "ordained by God himself, foretold by the prophets, preached by the apostles, and approved by the birth, life and death of our Redeemer Christ"².

Soon after Charles was elected to the German throne in 1519, Gattinara wrote: "Sire ... now that God has done you the prodigious grace of elevating you above all the kings and all the princes of Christianity, giving you a degree of power that only your predecessor Charlemagne has had until now, you are firmly set on the road to the Universal Monarchy in order to assemble all Christendom under one pastor."³

The coat-of-arms of Charles V consisted of a depiction of the Pillars of Hercules—the road from Europe

¹ H. G. Koenigsberger, *The Habsburgs and Europe. 1516-1660*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1971, p. 10.

² H. G. Koenigsberger, op. cit., p. 11.

³ Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et la Monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, Librairie Armand Colin, Paris, 1949, p. 521.

to countries across the seas—and an inscription of his motto, *plus ultra* (forever further).

In April 1521, Charles V told the Diet at Worms that to defend Christendom he was prepared to stake his kingdoms, possessions and friends, his flesh and blood, his soul and life. (These motives in the emperor's policy have given modern Western historians an excuse to portray him as the symbol of the idea of European unity.¹

The contemporaries of Charles V thought certain chances had appeared for the establishment of a universal empire in Western Europe. The absolute monarchies, especially that of Charles V, had resources at the time which greatly exceeded those of any medieval kingdom. Besides, the national consciousness had not yet developed to a point where it cemented resistance to any plans of forming supra-national states more or less approaching the status of the predominant power in that part of the continent by means of war and dynastic combinations.

The establishment of the empire of Charles V almost coincided with the introduction on a large scale of three most important inventions: first, the compass, whereby it became possible to discover and develop new trade routes and to assert European dominion over the boundless territories of the New World; second, book-printing, which played a most important role as a means of ideological warfare, propagation of the ambient conflict, of spiritual coercion used by the inspirers and organisers of that conflict; third, major changes in the art of war exceedingly favourable for the bigger powers and most of all for the strongest of them, the empire of Charles V.

The change from medieval military tactics occurred very rapidly: the footsoldier was finally given firearms. In Shakespeare's "First Part of *King Henry the Fourth*," Hotspur mentions some lord as saying:

*And that it was great pity, so it was,
This villainous saltpetre should be digg'd*

¹ Peter Rassow, "Das Bild Karls V. im Wandel der Jahrhunderte", in *Karl V. Der Kaiser und seine Zeit*, Böhlau Verlag, Cologne, 1960, p. 15.

*Out of the bowels of the harmless earth,
Which many a good tall fellow had destroy'd
So cowardly ... (Act I, Sc. III).*

At the end of the 15th and in the early 16th century, the French had so perfected the cannon that it could be wheeled to the field of battle and moved during the fighting. The invention was used by the troops of Charles V, who also introduced the use of limbers, which, when needed, transformed the two-wheeled gun into a four-wheeled cart suited for rapid motion across rough country. No less important was the perfection by the Spaniards of handguns, the arquebuses, which were later replaced by muskets. The appearance of muskets, in effect, ensured the Spanish infantry a century of predominance. In 1494, two-thirds of the French troops who at that time launched their campaign in Italy, consisted of knights-in-armour, whereas in 1528 the latter constituted just one-eleventh part of the French troops. The ratio in the Spanish army changed approximately to the same extent. Around 1521, Pope Leo X defined the duties of the cavalry as follows: to give cover to the troops, to ensure delivery of food supplies, to observe and collect intelligence, and to harass the enemy. What was struck out of this list was engagement in battles.

The empire of Charles V was objectively an attempt by feudal society to find a form of political superstructure that would benefit it most and, at the same time, meet the new economic needs or, more precisely, to use Marx's words, "the commercial requirements of the new world-market that the great discoveries of the end of the 15th century created".¹ The worldwide Hapsburg Empire would be superimposed on that world market. But this attempt was at cross purposes with the prevailing tendencies of worldwide development, inasmuch as the emergence of the world market had triggered a

¹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, p. 702.

keen rivalry between the European countries for predominance in world commerce.

The establishment of the empire of Charles V put up impediments to the development of new bourgeois relations in different parts of Europe. At the same time, the enormous financial expenditures incurred by the Hapsburgs to achieve their main goal—that of a universal monarchy—which were possible only through the exploitation of Spain's colonial empire, had to no small degree impelled the growth of manufacturing, the growth of the bourgeois mode of production in various more developed regions of Southern Germany, Holland, England, and some other countries. The irony of it was that the attempts to set up a universal monarchy, an undertaking of the extreme reactionary forces of Europe, led to the establishment of a mechanism that made Spanish colonial plunder a component of the system of the so-called primitive accumulation of capital.

The idea of a Catholic universal empire may be regarded as the feudal reactionaries' response to the proliferating movements of peasants and city plebs in the German lands, the towns of Flanders and Northern Italy (especially Florence), in Catalonia and other parts of Europe, at the end of the 15th century. The establishment of the supra-national empire of Charles V, though formally the result of a series of dynastic marriages, would have been inconceivable without the wish of the feudal ruling class (as well as of the top burgherdom) in some of the countries that became part of it, to place themselves under the patronage and protection of a powerful central authority that would suppress the mass of the working people.

In other parts of Europe, however, where the conditions were ripe for it, and where, in particular, the process of national consolidation had gone farther, the same role was to be objectively played by the emergence of their "own" absolutist monarchies.

The empire of Charles V, as I have already said, was based on the inherited Hapsburg possessions in Central Europe and on the Spanish state that had come into being through the unification of Castile

and Aragon in 1479 and the conquest of Grenada in 1492.

We will do well to remember, however, that centralised states had essentially come into being at this time in England (after the Wars of the Roses ended in 1485) and in France (after Picardy, Burgundy, Provence, Brittany, and some other historically French regions were incorporated in the royal lands between 1477 and 1491). Despite their incomplete consolidation and the survival of numerous aftermaths of the long period of feudal fragmentation, the new centralised states had a system of laws, a machinery of state subordinate to, and controlled by, the supreme authority, and armed forces which were for their time very strong. The shaping of absolutist nation-states was of a certain progressive significance up to a point, for it ended feudal fragmentation and paved the way for bourgeois relations.

The empire of Charles V had none of these progressive features. On the contrary, it faithfully fulfilled its function of suppressing popular movements that were liable to develop into early bourgeois revolutions.

In medieval Europe the definite community of historical destinies, social institutions, and cultures found expression in religious unity, then a universal form of ideology, and in the existence, along with the national languages, of Latin as the language of diplomacy, theology, and science, and also in such symbols of this unity as the Holy Roman Empire and the Catholic Church. The emergence of nation-states which expressed the specific features of a number of European peoples, did not eradicate their earlier ideological and spiritual community, though it did lead to a gradual decline of such supra-national institutions as the empire and the papacy.

The elements of spiritual unity retained their inherent progressive value, which, too, was unaffected by the development of the national cultures of the European peoples. What was more they acquired material backing through the internationalisation of economic affairs as well, a tendency, that was a built-in feature of capitalism already in the early bourgeois

era (along with another tendency, that of the awakening of nations). But this in no way detracted from the reactionary character of the plans to restore such outdated forms of European community as religious uniformism and imperial universalism, to revive Church unity and dominion of the papacy, and to establish a universal empire.

Then the most densely populated of the West European countries, France, too, could claim to be the centre of an all-European monarchy. Its central situation in Western Europe, with Spain, Italy, Germany and England clustering around it, gave it certain advantages in the struggle against its rivals. It advanced its claims already during its campaign in Italy in 1494, which led to the Franco-Spanish wars for supremacy on the peninsula. Francis I was defeated in the struggle for the imperial throne in 1519, despite being backed by Pope Leo X. (Seeing himself defeated, the French king and the Roman pontiff backed Duke Frederick of Saxony, Martin Luther's patron, for the imperial throne). The victory of Charles V meant that on land France was nearly surrounded by the emperor's possessions, and had to go over to the defensive. The following 40 years, however, consisted of nearly uninterrupted wars between the Hapsburgs and the French royal house of Valois.

The plans of a universal empire encountered overt and covert resistance even in the heart of the possessions of Charles V. No few Spanish politicians of that time held that Charles was conducting an imperial rather than national Spanish policy. But where it ran into direct resistance at once was Germany, whose subordination to the emperor's authority was to have been the first and decisive step on his road to European hegemony.

Germany's disintegration into territorial principalities began long before the Reformation. Similar developments had occurred also in the history of other countries, but gave place much earlier to the tendency towards unification and the emergence of nation-states.

In Germany, the process of fragmentation had

deep social and economic roots; the disintegration of the purely feudal empire was accompanied by division between imperial lands. The only winners were "the bearers of centralisation amidst the disunity, the bearers of local and provincial centralisation—the *princes*, at whose side the Emperor himself became more and more of a prince like the others"¹.

In the 16th century the concept of German unity did not refer to a single state but to the cooperation of states comprising the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation headed by an emperor who was elected for life by the most influential princes. Germany's specific historical development had not forged powerful enough internal forces advocating the country's real unity in the 16th century. Charles V tried to impose this unity from above, using the resources of his other possessions. If he had succeeded, Germany would have become one of the parts of the universal Hapsburg empire. But unity based on the triumph of Catholic reaction on a European scale was no more attainable than the universal monarchy itself. The socio-economic reasons that aggravated the fragmentation enabled the princes, who used the Reformation for this purpose, to effectively resist the emperor.

The Reformation was a highly complex social development. Alongside the burgherdom, it also included a popular current that stood to the left of the burghers, and the princely Reformation that stood to the right of them. All these currents surfaced distinctly in Germany during the peasant war of 1525. After the suppression of the peasant movement, however, the princely Reformation was the one that exercised the most immediate influence on the system of international relations. In other countries, too, the consolidation of Protestantism in the early half of the 16th century was in the nature of a princely Reformation. This was true of England and Denmark, and also of Sweden, whose kings broke off relations with Rome, confiscated the possessions of the Catho-

¹ Frederick Engels, "The Peasant War in Germany", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, p. 402.

lic priesthood, and formed national churches. Their example was covertly envied by those monarchs who had remained freely or forcibly loyal to Catholicism. Such an "orderly" nature of the Reformation initially cushioned the impact of its victory in some countries on the system of international relations; this impact made itself fully felt later, when the ambient conflict was at its height.

Humanists and Jesuits

In 1534, two entirely dissimilar men made the decisive step that later led to their canonisation by the Catholic Church.

In London, former Lord Chancellor Thomas More, brilliant author of *Utopia*, refused to take the oath accepting a new procedure of succession to the throne as provided for by an act of Parliament of March 30 of that year, legitimising the Reformation.

It may be recalled that the matrimonial affairs of Henry VIII, champion of the faith as he called himself, who had until then personally refuted Luther's "heresies", served as the formal pretext for the Reformation in England. (In response, Luther called the English king an ass and a buffoon). *Non possumus* (impossible) were the words that Pope Clement VII borrowed from the Acts of the Apostles in his reply to Henry's request to divorce him from his first wife, Catherine of Aragon. (King Henry wanted the divorce in order to marry Anne Boleyn, a court beauty). The pontiff's refusal was made not for religious but purely temporal political reasons. *Non possumus* meant the Pope in Rome would not go against Catherine's nephew, Charles V, king of Spain and German emperor, whose possessions in Italy surrounded the papal state on all sides. But Henry VIII was not inclined to take orders from a Pope who himself took orders from the emperor. "We must thank God, Father of all Mercy, who can compel even such a devil with all his devil's servants to serve the bliss of all Christians," exclaimed Luther on learning about the break between Henry VIII and Rome.

The Act of Parliament which More rejected put an end to papal power over the Church in England, declared the king's marriage to Catherine of Aragon unlawful and deprived Mary, Henry's daughter by that marriage, of the right of succession to the throne; the children of Henry and his second wife, Anne Boleyn, were made the successors. All attempts to force Thomas More, who enjoyed great prestige, to change his attitude were in vain, though he knew perfectly well that his implacable stand would cost him his life. He was sentenced to death on obviously false evidence, and showed extraordinary courage when being beheaded.

In 1534, when More languished in prison on charges of affinity with Catholicism and hostility to the Reformation, a former Spanish soldier studying theology in Paris, and a few of his associates, decided to create a monastic order, the Society of Jesus, which became the shock force in the struggle against Protestantism. The reader will probably think it impermissible to even compare those two names—that of a great humanist who was centuries ahead of his time, and that of a sombre fanatic who swore to root out heresy by all possible means (though both were canonised by Rome). Yet they are quite comparable from the point of view of the latest Catholic historiography).

Papal speculation with the name of Thomas More is obvious. On the face of it More did, indeed, accept a martyr's death. Was this done in the name of Catholicism? Did the brilliant thinker who, naturally, could not overcome the historical limitations of his time, really think the legality or illegality of a lecherous tyrant's second marriage was something worth staking one's life on? Did he really believe that the Pope's authority over the English Church was a blessing despite the abuses he knew of so well? Serious scholars do not accept the version of clerical historians, but neither have they a common opinion about the true motives behind More's sacrifice.

Some portray him a martyr in the name of religious toleration. But More was never consistent in his views on that point. In his *Utopia*, which he wrote

in 1516, that is, before the Reformation began, he advocated complete freedom of religion and of expressing different opinions so long as this was not accompanied by attempts to impose them on others by force. As Lord Chancellor, More declined to persecute heretics. But in his *Dialogue* (1528) he portrayed heresy as criminal and treacherous, and in his other works even approved of force against heretics. As he saw it, popular movements under the banner of the Reformation, like the peasant war in Germany, could do nothing but harm. More saw the papacy as an obstacle to the despotism of kings. He must have seen the calamities that the royal Reformation spelled for the people. The confiscation of monastic possessions, after all, led to mass expulsions of tenants by the new landlords to clear the land for the more profitable occupation of sheep breeding. There must be some truth in this assumption, though More had noted even before this that sheep had begun to "eate up, and swallow downe, the very men themselves", and, certainly, he could not have foreseen the social and economic consequences of the Reformation. Besides, they were far from similar in different countries, and it was certainly not preordained for England to follow the path that it subsequently took. Thomas More, on the other hand, could see quite clearly what the Reformation had already brought about by the early 30s—the division of Western Christianity (with an obvious tendency to disintegrate into hostile sects) and a military confrontation between the resulting two camps at a time when the Osman Empire was escalating its onslaught.

It appears likely that More's attitude was prompted first of all by the opinion that the Reformation was inescapably tied up with the ambient conflict, which his friend Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam was so afraid of and had long since vainly endeavoured to prevent. It seemed to Erasmus that More had not been cautious enough and had needlessly provoked the royal anger.

"Would that he had never embroiled himself in this perilous business," Erasmus exclaimed, "and had left the theological cause to the theologians!" Yet

he had been of like mind with More, though quite different from him in character. More important still, Erasmus himself had failed to leave the theological cause to the theologians. We see him condemning war in all his works. 'Is not war the very seedbed and fountainhead of all praiseworthy deeds? Now then, what could be more foolish than to undertake, for some reason or other, a struggle from which both sides emerge more harmed than helped? ... Otherwise it is parasites, pimps, thieves, assassins, peasants, dolts, bankrupts, the very dregs of humanity, who perform this noble feat, not ivory-tower philosophers.'¹

Erasmus's best known anti-war treatise is *The Complaint of Peace* (1517). The chief hero of that treatise is Peace, complaining about its hardships and people's insanity. Love of peace is a law of the firmament sanctified by Christianity. War is contrary to the essence of the Christian teaching. The reasons for the wars fought in Europe were insignificant. Often, they amounted to mere envy of a prosperous neighbour country. Wars were started by those who should really be champions of peace—monarchs, nobles, prelates. By means of war, tyrants criminally tried to strengthen their authority over the people with not the slightest concern for the latter's welfare. The hardships of war fell upon the people though in all justice they should fall upon the rulers. Erasmus wrote all this, and more. He denounced dynastic rights and claims which lay at the root of dynastic wars. The right to a possession derived from the consent of the people, and the latter could deny such consent. In dynastic wars it was not a question of replacing a tyrant by a lawful ruler, but a question of whom the people paid their taxes to. In some of his works, Erasmus denounced all wars without exception. He stressed that wars and Christianity were incompatible. He even rejected the opinion of St Augustinus, who justified war in certain circumstances, and said this opinion was contrary to evangelical doctrine.

¹ Desiderius Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1979, pp. 35, 36.

It will not be right, however, to place Erasmus among the out-and-out pacifists; except where it concerned propagating ideas of peace, he was inclined to vindicate just wars. Under this head he put the defensive wars against the Turks. Paraphrasing St Luke, he wrote that one should not wholly condemn a war fought to defend universal peace and order where it cannot be defended by any other means. Such a war should be fought by a pious and worthy monarch with the consent of those for whom it was being fought. Erasmus stressed that it should be fought with moderation, that is, bringing losses in life and property down to the minimum, and striving for the earliest possible completion of hostilities. But to make all wars unnecessary, Erasmus suggested outlawing them legislatively, declaring all rights that led to war invalid, and concluding treaties that guarantee security, define the borders of states to precision, and strictly regulate the succession to the throne. In Erasmus's view the monarch should have the right to declare war only on obtaining the consent of the people, and he proposed that an international court of arbitration should be set up, consisting of priests and laymen who enjoyed prestige and authority among all concerned.

Examining the functions of a monarch, Erasmus also analysed the tasks of the state in foreign policy (Chapter VIII of his *Institutis*, 1516). All Christian rulers were joined in the common Christian faith. In contrast, among godless and untrue monarchs even alliances could frequently lead to wars. A monarch worthy of his office should act on the common good when concluding an alliance with another state, or else the alliance became a conspiracy against the people.

Erasmus recommended Christian monarchs restraint when dealing with non-Christian states, since the latter were either incapable of compliance with their commitments or were situated too far for friendly ties with them to yield any benefit. One should live in friendship with neighbours, especially neighbours who speak the same language and have similar morals and customs. A ruler's wisdom materialised in his skill

of determining correctly the ability of other peoples to abide by commitments that devolved upon them in an alliance.

In the above advice, Erasmus departed from his usual criterion of toleration and Christian love, directing foreign policy above all to the defence of state interests, which, in principle, did not rule out alliance with practitioners of other faiths.

Erasmus's advice was addressed to the nation-states that had emerged in his era. Some of them had become great powers, but in many ways retained the notions of foreign policy inherited from the times of feudal fragmentation.

Even before the Reformation, Erasmus advocated Church reform. In fact, his foes said that Luther simply continued what Erasmus had begun. Quite obviously, Erasmus sympathised with Luther's criticism of the vices of the clergy. "Luther's crime," he remarked, "consisted in two things. He had attacked the Pope's crown and the monks' bellies." But as soon as he realised that the Reformation entailed schism within the Western Christian world, Erasmus, who had originally approved of the views of the followers of the Reformation, reversed his stand. But he also ardently denounced the use of force against Protestants—both for moral reasons, and because persecution would only aggravate the division of Europe. In 1526, he suggested the following compromise: in the cities where Protestantism had grown strong, the two sides should know their place and should be left to follow their own conscience until time created opportunities for some sort of agreement. In substance, this anticipated the principle, *cujus regio ejus religio* (he who holds power, his is the faith), and the division of Germany on religious lines, which was arrived at in the Peace of Augsburg of 1555 after several decades of struggle.

Erasmus and his followers among the Catholics were regarded as a party which sought to avert the development of the struggle against the Reformation into an ambient conflict. Subjectively, they endeavoured to restore the disrupted unity of the Western Christian culture. Coloured in humanitarian tones,

their ideas found fertile soil in the wish not to imperil the recently attained unity of the state when the debate between the friends and foes of the Reformation acquired considerable scale and created the danger of outside interference. To be sure, devotees of religious intolerance often motivated their own actions in the same way: resolute eradication of heresy inside the country they regarded as the only dependable way of preventing it from becoming an object of struggle between the hostile Protestant camp and the Counter-Reformation, of preventing the state from becoming involved in an ambient conflict.

In France, influenced by the humanists who were under the patronage of Margaret of Navarre, sister of Francis I, the king had for some 15 years practised limited religious toleration. François Rabelais, setting forth Picrochole's programme of conquests in *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (Book I, Ch. XXIII), actually reproduced to the last detail the predatory plans of Charles V in Europe and on other continents, up to and including the occupation of Algeria and Tunis. But already in 1535, Francis (a king "with hot blood and meagre brain", as Anatole France described him) changed course abruptly and issued an edict on exterminating heretics. The persecutions gained enormously in scale after the issue on June 1, 1540, of the Edict of Fontainebleau. The main agencies conducting the persecutions were the secular administrative juridical institutions known as "parliaments". Many thousands of people fell victim to juridical and also non-juridical abuses of power. The witch-hunt gained still more in intensity under Henry II (1547-1559). Yet, the result, if there was any, was diametrically opposite to the expected one, and only hastened the spread of the Reformation, the victory of Calvinism over the originally predominant Lutheranism, and the conversion of a large segment of the feudal nobility, including Anthony of Bourbon, King of Navarre (1559), to Protestantism. Objectively, as we see, the persecution led to what the crown had above all sought to prevent—the division of the country, the appearance of a convenient pretext for resuming internecine strife, and opportu-

nities for the Hapsburgs, the opponents of the Valois, to interfere in the internal affairs of France. Ultimately, the country became involved in the ambient conflict completely contrary to its national interests.

He Who Holds Power, His Is the Faith

The conflict between the friends and foes of the Reformation did not at once assume its final outlines. Luther did not want a schism. All he wanted was a Church reform. Even Rome interpreted his activity in this light. The programme of Charles V, too, who declared himself an admirer of Erasmus, gave hope of an agreement. His brother King Ferdinand, who from 1531 controlled the Austrian lands of the Hapsburgs, and Chancellor Mercurino Gattinara, also adhered to this line. Wars with external enemies kept the emperor's main forces busy. But relations with Rome, the spiritual centre of the Counter-Reformation, were often strained to the extreme, for Charles V was exceedingly hostile to the political pretensions of the papacy. And other Catholic monarchs were not at all foreign to such sentiment.

Hence the emperor's repeated attempts, from 1524 on, to negotiate an agreement with the Protestant princes at sittings of the Diet. But the policy of settling the conflict by some degree of religious toleration (associated with the ideas of Erasmus of Rotterdam) proved to be either wholly impossible or possible only in part, and for a relatively short term, in some of the principalities, by virtue of specific circumstances that happened to arise there (a relative equilibrium of strength between the two sides, the wish of the monarchs to temporarily blunt internal collisions in face of an external threat, and the like).

Territorial demarcation, that is, division into Catholic and Protestant principalities, entailing a search for some sort of *modus vivendi*, turned out to be the only historically realisable form of this idea. But alongside the course advocated by Erasmus, and usually based on his course, other attempts were made, too, to secure by mutual ideological concessions some sort of conciliation between Catholicism

and Protestantism, if not restoration of the unity of the Church.

On the Protestant side, the initiative belonged to Philipp Melanchthon (1497-1560), a collaborator of Luther's, an ideologist of the princely Reformation, and to use Engels's words, "a model of zealous stick-in-the-mud philistine". At a Diet sitting in Augsburg in 1530 he offered the Catholics considerable concessions. The Catholics turned them down as a basis for agreement, all the more so because the greater part of the Protestants, too, would not have accepted them. The other, and last, attempt by Melanchthon to settle matters was his *Confession of Augsburg* (1530), which he wrote that year and in which the Lutheran dogmas were so presented as to serve as a unity programme for the moderate wing of the Reformation containing gestures of reconciliation with Catholicism.

The *Confession of Augsburg* contained a mild form of Protestant criticism of the doctrine of grace; it demanded an end to the celibacy of priests, the giving of communion to laymen in both kinds, etc., and stressed that the Protestant teaching was in no way contrary to the basics of Catholicism. It rejected all the old heresies, those of Manicheanism, Pelagianism, and Arianism. Catholic theologians immediately drew up a refutation of the *Confession*, and demanded that the Protestants disavow their heretical mistakes. Thus, while achieving his prime aim, that of defining the Lutheran dogmas, Melanchthon failed to secure a compromise settlement with the Catholic Church.

The desire to find a platform for restoring unity also surfaced on the Catholic side. George Witzel (1501-1573), a priest who had converted to Lutheranism in 1524 and returned to the Catholic fold nine years later, advanced various projects for reconciling the two Churches. Towards the end of his career, he became an intimate of King (later Emperor) Ferdinand I. "Is Christ divided?" Witzel exclaimed pathetically when offering his compromise solutions. George Cassander of the Netherlands (1513-1566) took a similar stand. He held there was a single platform for all Christians, save the radicals of

the Reformation. In a special treatise he examined the *Confession of Augsburg* point by point, and tried to reconcile it with the Catholic doctrine. These efforts to find a common basis for Catholicism and Lutheranism had social and political grounds, that made reconciliation possible. No small role here, to be sure, was played by fear of the people's current in the Reformation and the situation that resulted in Germany from the upswing of feudal reaction (the second enslavement of the peasants). There was also the princely character of the Lutheranism of that time, as well as the international situation, though these and all the other reasons were equally far removed from the humanist dream of Erasmus, from his hope of eradicating wars and rooting out hostility between European peoples.

Melanchthon was fiercely assailed for his conciliatory attitude. Small wonder that the last words he spoke on his deathbed were words of gratitude to God for delivering him from the fury of the theologians. The social grounds and political reasons that had prompted even the Hapsburgs to from time to time encourage conciliatory gestures, could only just foster these gestures but certainly not lead to their success, for that would have been contrary to the main tendencies in Europe's social political and ideological development.

Success was impossible if only for the fact that it contradicted the aspirations of the extremist wing of Catholicism which had taken the upper hand in the conservative camp, and those of Calvinism, the burgher current in the Reformation, which had been growing rapidly in the 1540s. There could be no reconciliation, at best some form of coexistence between states with different religions, which would renounce "export" of religion with resort to arms, and pledge the minimum interference in other countries' affairs even if an acute struggle was under way there between friends and foes of the Reformation. But in the 16th century even this objective proved attainable only in part, for some limited time, and only as a relative truce in the ambient conflict.

For a long time, Charles V looked for some non-religious, purely political way of strengthening imperial authority and undercutting the independence of the princes. At the very least, he wanted to shift the axis of the conflict.

In the course of an ambient conflict (sometimes even at its beginning) one of the sides usually tries to deideologise it externally. This is done for various reasons—to divide the enemy coalition by denying it a unifying ideology, to embroil countries refusing to participate in the conflict, to win the sympathy of neutral states, to neutralise the hesitant, and so on.

Charles V tried to portray his campaigns against the Protestant princes as a war against offenders of the empire's law and order. But such tactics only united the Protestant and the Catholic princes in repulsing the emperor. Neither Spanish nor German, the policy of Charles V was not really concentrated on winning either of the ambient conflicts—against Protestantism and against Islam. After all, the conflict with France which lasted throughout his reign belonged to neither of the two conflicts (as was the case later, when religious wars erupted in France). Juridical arguments were sought to vindicate the emperor's claims, thus betraying their reactionary essence. Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303) had once announced the deposition of King Philip IV (the Fair) of France and offered the "vacant" throne to Albert, the Austrian duke of the house of Hapsburgs. The latter, however, was too cautious to accept the doubtful papal gift. But two centuries later, Charles V, his descendant, maintained, with reference to that gift, that France was his hereditary possession and an indissoluble part of his empire.

Chancellor Gattinara's idea of destroying France as a major European power encountered resistance even within the Hapsburg camp among the Burgundian and Castilian nobility, which had not yet abandoned the medieval idea of "familial" solidarity among European monarchs. Charles V tried to find the middle of the road between a universal monarchy and an alliance of Christian monarchs in

which the chief role would, naturally, belong to him.

Francis I, on the contrary, having been defeated in the election of 1519, declared himself emperor of "his possessions". But on February 24, 1525, in the battle at Pavia, the Spanish infantry routed his troops, he fell into the hands of the enemy and was led captive to Madrid. There, in January 1526, he signed a treaty renouncing his claims to Milan and Naples, and to Burgundy. But for this treaty to go into effect, he had to be released on his word of honour and allowed to go to France. The moment the king regained his freedom, however, he not only reneged on his concessions, but also formed a coalition against the emperor encompassing France, Rome, and Venice. The coalition was supported by all the other foes of the emperor in Italy, and also tried to win the support of England.

In the summer of 1544, nearly two decades later, the military situation again became unfavourable for Francis I. With the help of King Henry VIII of England, the most powerful of the Protestant monarchs whose troops threatened Paris from Normandy, the army of Charles V crossed the Marne. But Charles V had not the money to pay his mercenaries and agreed to what was for Francis I a relatively easy peace, concluded at Crepy in September. Reaffirming the terms of one of the previous peace treaties, that of Cambrai, the new treaty had Francis I renouncing claim to Flanders, Artois and Naples in exchange for the emperor's similar renunciation of his rights to Burgundy. The treaty provided for the Duke of Orleans, the youngest son of Francis, marrying the daughter of either Charles V or of the latter's brother Ferdinand, and receiving Milan or Flanders as dowry, though neither could ever be incorporated in France (this article of the treaty was never carried into effect because the Duke of Orleans died the following year). In the secret articles of the treaty, Francis promised to make no alliances hostile to Charles V, and to back the latter against heretics.

Throughout the early decades of the Reformation, the foes of Charles V could not count on any

direct support from France, that most powerful of the anti-Hapsburg forces. The French monarchy, which had an alliance with the "infidel" Turks, refrained from supporting the German "heretics" until after the Protestant princes succeeded in smothering the democratic currents of the Reformation. When France joined the struggle during the reign of Henry II, the aims of Charles V became still more impracticable.

The Treaty of Crepy was not an enduring one. The war was renewed with a vengeance a few years later. During that war, by the way, the theory of natural borders (*les frontières naturelles*) was evidently first advanced in France. Its appearance was associated with the occupation of Verdun, Metz, and Tulle by King Henry II in 1552. The attempts of Emperor Charles V to win back Metz failed due to the city's stubborn defence by the Duke of Guise. It was fashionable, too, to speak of the Rhine as the natural border of Gaul. In 1568, Jean le Bon, a Lorrainian who was the physician of Cardinal Guise, published his treatise, *The Rhine for the King*, in which he first advanced the idea that France could claim for its border to run along the Rhine not by historical title but for "natural" reasons¹.

Although the Peace of Crepy proved an unending truce, it secured for Charles V the neutrality of France and thereby gave him a free hand for several years. In these several years, the emperor was determined to deliver a decisive blow to the German Protestant princes. The focus of the conflict in the huge territory ruled by Charles V shifted. Formerly he may have regarded Germany as a source of funds to finance his imperial policy. Now, the resources of his other possessions—Spain and its overseas colonies, his Italian lands, and Holland—were being marshalled against Germany. The Protestant forces lined up against Charles V had formed the League of Schmalkalden. It was inaugurated on December 25, 1530, in the town of Schmalkalden of

¹ Gaston Zeller, "La monarchie d'ancien régime et les frontières naturelles", in *Revue d'histoire moderne*, August-October 1933, pp. 307-311.

Hessen, where the princes converted to Lutheranism—the Duke of Saxony, the Landgrave of Hessen, and others—had gathered along with representatives of a number of cities.

In the latter half of the 1540s, Charles V at last ventured to settle the issue by war. In 1547, his army defeated the troops of the German Protestant princes, among whom there had been disagreement. That campaign was known as the Schmalkaldenian War. In the so-called Interim Augsburg Settlement of 1548, Charles still tried to satisfy some of the religious demands of the Protestants, but the latter had by then recovered from the defeat and resumed the war. Only by accident did the emperor escape capture by them at Innsbruck. They seized Augsburg, while the emperor's other enemies also resumed armed actions against him. Charles had no choice but to instruct his brother to negotiate with the Protestant princes. The idea of uniting all Christendom under his authority again proved unattainable an illusion that led to painful failures again and again. It said in the preamble to the Treaty of Augsburg concluded in 1555 that "for the sake of saving the German nation, our beloved Fatherland, from utter destruction and division, we have deemed it essential to enter into this agreement". The Treaty was based on the principle of *cujus regio ejus religio*. (True, this was first formulated as such by an imperial jurist as late as 1591.) The defeat of Charles's policy was not due to the German princes' striving to retain the Church and monastic lands they had captured, but because the Reformation, which, on the whole, reflected the interests of society's progressive development, had sunk deep root in the popular mind. Liberal historians stressed that the Peace of Augsburg was a success for the Lutherans, who had upheld its chief principle that the secular ruler had the right to determine the religion of his subjects. At the same time, they did not conceal their regret that the Peace of Augsburg had not been a real reconciliation. British historian Henry Kamen, for example, wrote in his book, *The Rise of Toleration*, that "the Peace of Augsburg offered a temporary solution to the reli-

gious problem by perpetuating the practice of intolerance". Kamen described the treaty as follows:

"The essential feature of Augsburg is that it was an agreement among German autocrats. Toleration was denied to everyone save to the princes, who were given the freedom to uproot vast numbers of their population who refused to accept the religion laid down for them by the State. Only Catholicism and Lutheranism were made a party to this agreement: all other faiths were excluded."¹ A severe judgement, but a just one. What alternatives existed then is another matter. Kamen was evidently inclined to regard Erasmus's dream of religious toleration as such an alternative, but the march of history showed it was impracticable. French historian Philippe Erlanger recently described *cujus regio ejus religio* as a detestable principle, a caricature of the freedom of thought². The true alternative, however, was not religious toleration but a continuation of religious wars in the name of a Catholic victory which history proved impossible. Besides, religious toleration and intolerance meant different things in different historical conditions. But of that later.

The religious settlement of 1555 was not the result of any reconciliation or any dampening of the differences between the different faiths, and still less of any idea of religious toleration (but rather of the very opposite). It was the result of the prevailing political situation, and was concluded by secular rulers who did not ask the opinion or seek the sanction of the Church authorities. The settlement of Augsburg of 1555 brought half a century of relative peace to Germany, while flames of war engulfed a large part of Western Europe. Certainly, the "abstention" of the Austrian branch of the Hapsburgs, whose members were enthroned as German emperors, from a part in the second stage of the military conflict, making this relatively long period of peace possible,

¹ Henry Kamen, *The Rise of Toleration*, World University Library, London, 1967, pp. 95-96.

² Philippe Erlanger, *Rodolphe II de Habsbourg (1552-1612). L'empereur insolite*, Editions Albin Michel, Paris, 1971, p. 39.

was prompted by a number of different reasons (of which more later). But this effect was possible only in conditions created after the Peace of Augsburg. An attempt to revise it led to the Thirty Years War, the results of which only reaffirmed its provisions. Southern Germany remained mostly Catholic, Northern Germany was Protestant, with Lutheranism dominant in the North-East and Calvinism later in the North-West. The religious settlement of Augsburg was thus objectively the first important step towards religious toleration. The breakdown of the attempts at resolving the conflict by military means led inevitably to a forced acknowledgement of religious toleration in inter-state relations. At the same time, the principle of *cujus regio ejus religio* visibly strengthened the hand of the princes in relation to all forms of representative government.

The attempts of Charles V to suppress the resistance of the Protestant princes with resort to arms had the effect of intensifying political fragmentation and turning the Reformation into an instrument of the "territorialisation" of Germany. The ambient conflict whereby the Hapsburgs sought to unite Europe in a single empire created additional barriers for the merging of states that comprised the Roman Empire of the German Nation into a single Germany, and this for the duration of a whole historical epoch.

Article 18 of the Treaty of Augsburg said that no ruling archbishop, bishop or any other prelate might retain his office and any other benefices with all the incomes and profits received heretofore and with any right to compensation, if he should at any time be converted to the Protestant religion, though no damage was thereby incurred to his honour, while the capitularies retained the right to elect and anoint to his office another person of the old faith. In other words, princes of the Church were forbidden to change their religion. The provisions of that article could clearly serve—and did serve—as a juridical pretext for yet another stage of the ambient conflict, the Thirty Years War.

Bloody Mary

Following the defeat of the Catholic camp in Germany, the attempts at securing the Counter-Reformation in England also ended in failure, though at one time it had seemed that this goal was already achieved. Henry VIII was succeeded by his child son, Edward VI, during whose reign the struggle between cliques of courtiers blended with the activity of the foes of the Reformation who succeeded time and again in using the disaffection of the people for their own purposes. During Edward's reign, authority was contested by the king's uncles, Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, who was beheaded, and John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, who defeated him. The Catholic camp tried to intervene in the struggle, resorting to methods of secret warfare.

In the spring of 1550 the imperial ambassador to England, Van der Delft, drew up a plan for the escape of Princess Mary Tudor (the daughter of Henry VIII by Catherine of Aragon) aboard a Spanish ship which was cruising near Harwich for this purpose. The plan failed, and the English government redoubled its surveillance of Mary, who fanatically defended her right to remain Catholic.

In 1551, Emperor Charles V discussed a possible landing in England of the Spanish army. His new ambassador in London, by name of Scheyfve, had spies in English ports instructed to find out if royal help was being given to the Scottish pirates waging war against Dutch ships. (We may recall that Scotland was then closely linked by dynastic ties with France, the chief rival of the empire of Charles V, which included the Netherlands).

After the death of Edward VI, the Duke of Northumberland tried to put Jane Grey, the niece of Henry VIII, on the throne, but failed and was executed. Mary Tudor was crowned queen and decided to carry out a Counter-Reformation in England. True, it was clear at once that the lands confiscated from the monasteries under Henry could not be returned to them. Here, Mary encountered the resistance even of her ministers. At a meeting of the Royal

Council, old John Russell, Earl of Bedford, swore that he valued his dear Woburn Abbey more than all the fatherly advice of Rome. The resolute stand of the ministers made even the fanatic queen agree that the restoration of Catholicism should not involve the return of seized Church property. But even after this, the restoration encountered persistent disaffection in the country.

Mary Tudor married Philip, the future King Philip II, son of Charles V. As a marriage gift, his father gave Philip the Kingdom of Naples and Duchy of Milan. But English Parliament did not agree to his coronation, and for the English Philip forever remained only the queen's consort. Nevertheless, the threat that England would be swallowed up by the powerful Hapsburgs became very real.

Back in January 1554, a rebellion broke out headed by Thomas Wyatt and other Protestant nobles. The rebels broke through to London, but after some hard fighting were routed by royal troops. Wyatt had tried to gain the support of Elizabeth, the queen's sister. The young princess, however, whom past experience had taught caution, did not reply to the message she had received. All the same, she and Viscount Courtenay, another possible claimant to the throne, were quickly sent to the Tower.

Contemporaries report that Sir John Bridges, Chief Yeoman Warder of the Tower, was handed an order to execute Elizabeth. It bore the Queen's Seal, but her signature was missing. Bridges refused to carry it out. He went to see the queen, who told him she knew nothing of the order, and summoned her retinue—Bishop Stephen Gardiner, and others—whom she reprimanded for acting without her sanction.

If this story is true, the fabrication of the false order may have also involved the emperor's influential ambassador, Simon Renard. He is known to have believed that Elizabeth would willy-nilly become the focus of the Protestant party. But when he insisted on her execution, Mary decided to just send Elizabeth away from London for there was no proof that the princess was encouraging rebellion. True, a French translation of Elizabeth's letter to the queen

had been discovered in an intercepted French diplomatic pouch. But had the princess herself handed the copy of her letter to the French? It was an open secret that the queen's court teemed with spies. It was even suspected that Antoine de Noailles, the French ambassador, had married one of Elizabeth's ladies-in-waiting to gain access to the princess's correspondence.

Antoine de Noailles and his brother François, appointed to the embassy to assist him, though representing the Catholic king of France, lost no time to actively support the Protestant party in the hope of blunting Spanish influence.

King Henry II of France even decided to back a new conspiracy against Queen Mary. It was to start with an uprising in the western counties, whereupon the rebels would march on London and capture the Tower and the Mint. In the meantime, a group of conspirators who had emigrated to France would land in England, capture Portsmouth and Yarmouth Castle while the French occupy White Island. Mary Tudor could then be deposed and Elizabeth enthroned in her place. The carefully laid plan did not, however, make much headway: at first the French king hesitated, with the more impatient of the conspirators deciding to act on their own. In the meantime, however, the spies of Cardinal Pole, the queen's chief adviser, spotted the treason. The plotters were seized. Elizabeth was again under suspicion. A search in her residence resulted in the confiscation among the intimates of the princess of a large quantity of subversive anti-Catholic literature smuggled into England from abroad. Again, the clouds thickened for Elizabeth. The queen discussed her fate in letters to her husband Philip, who had left England for Spain. At that time, Spain had strained relations with France and Pope Paul IV. England's help was therefore especially valuable, and, considering his wife's poor health, Philip II sought to win the favour of her probable successor beforehand. He advised Mary to be tolerant towards her sister. On March 20, 1557, he returned for a while to England. Soon thereafter, at the end of April, 100 emigrés with Thomas Stafford at their head, left France and landed in Yorkshire. They maintained

that they were acting with Elizabeth's total support. But the new rising, too, was swiftly crushed by royal troops. The captured rebels were executed without delay. Philip tried to use the obvious French involvement in the rising to obtain broad English help in the war against Henry II. And, once more, he used influence to avert any trial of Elizabeth. England was inveigled into the war against France.

This was a striking example of how the immediate aims of the Catholic camp as a whole and those of its leading power could diverge, and seriously. After Elizabeth I was enthroned at the end of 1558, and made the Church of England official again, Philip II continued to back the new English queen against her enemies, Catholic France and Mary Stuart, queen of Scots, widow of Francis II, King of France. Philip's support, in the final analysis, reposed on the fear that England's defeat in the struggle against the coalition of France and Scotland would change the balance of power and weaken Spain's hold on the Netherlands. But Philip's hopes that Queen Elizabeth would continue along the course followed by Mary Tudor was built on sand.

The Sack of Rome

Paradoxical though this may seem, the Reformation temporarily strengthened the papacy in relation to the secular rulers. They stopped their attempts to create an antipope and counterpose him to the pontiff in Rome, as this had occurred repeatedly in the Middle Ages. Now any monarch locked in struggle with Rome preferred to side with the Protestants and, in one way or another, become head of the reformed national Church. In the remaining Catholic countries it was hopeless creating an antipope because now Rome was the ultimate judge of what was Catholic and what was not. All the same, on May 4, 1527, a large imperial mercenary army appeared at the walls of Rome under the command of Constable Bourbon, who had betrayed the French king and sided with Charles V. Many German mercenaries were Lutherans filled with hatred for the Catholic

capital which was for them the focus of all evil. The Pope appealed to the people of Rome, saying that God had sent the Lutheran heretics to the walls of the city to find their death there in punishment for their sins¹. On May 5, the constable led his troops in an assault on Rome, and was slain at the very outset of the attack. But the German and Spanish regiments soon lunged into the streets of the city and began butchering its townsmen. Seeing the city captured by the enemy, Pope Clement VII hastily retired from the Vatican to the fortified castle of Saint Angelo. As he was running along the long corridor leading to the castle, historian Paulus Jovius ran behind him, holding the edge of the pontiff's mantle, and covering him with his own mantle and purple hat to conceal him from enemy soldiers. It was much more difficult, however, to hide from the verdict of history.

While Clement VII heard the demands of the victors, mercenaries of the imperial army masqueraded in cardinals' attire and jestingly proclaimed Martin Luther the new Pope. Contemporaries report that on the first day of the Sack of Rome the imperial soldiery slaughtered something like 8,000 townsmen. Catholic priests were special targets of the mercenaries' hate. Many a church was plundered, and priceless works of art destroyed. The palaces of cardinals, including those who sided with the emperor, suffered the same fate. On the following day and after, however, the Germans in effect stopped killing and merely extorted a ransom from their victims. The Spanish soldiers tortured their captives, demanding that they reveal where they had hidden their gold and other valuables. In his *A Roman Journal*, Stendhal, after setting forth the evidence of eye-witnesses, added:

"Charles V was at that time only twenty-seven years of age, but he understood that Rome can be fought only with its own weapons. When he learned of the horrors which, lacking a counter-order on his part, lasted seven months, he organized a fine proces-

¹ Pierre Duhamel, *Le connétable de Bourbon ou L'honneur de trahir*, Librairie académique Perrin, Paris, 1971, p. 310.

sion to ask God for the delivery of the Pope, which depended solely on himself, Charles V."

The emperor's secretary, Alfonso de Valdés, announced that Rome had been punished for the sins of the Pope and his court who had obstructed concord and unity of the Christian churches in the fight against infidels. In the Sack of Rome, its contemporaries saw a warning of Doomsday soon (true, it was predicted many times for other reasons, and Charles V himself panicked more than once). When Michelangelo returned to Rome a few years later, in 1534, he saw a damaged fresco by Raphael on which someone had used a dagger to inscribe the name of Luther. Was this the end of Italy, the end of the hopes aroused by the Renaissance?

US historian Peter Partner wrote a few years ago that it had been "a sacrilegious desecration of the great holy place of Catholic Christendom, effected at the very moment when the doctrines of the German Reformation were about to enter other parts of Europe, and when the name 'Protestant' was about to be born".¹ And this desecration had been committed in the name of the emperor, the head of the Catholic camp, who had recruited his mercenaries among followers of the new, as yet weak, religious doctrine to use them against Protestants and against opponents in his own camp. To be sure, the contemporaries of the Sack of Rome, and among them even the Roman pontiffs, soon consigned the event to oblivion: it was obscured by other events and interests.

Indicatively the troops of Charles V seized and sacked Rome, not Wittenberg where Luther had posted his theses, or Geneva which would become the centre of Calvinism. Even in the early 1530s, the papacy left the doors open both for the subsequent wars, against the German Protestant princes and for a religious peace in the empire, which, indeed, was not achieved until after these wars.

One of the crucial levers in the possession of Charles V was the opportunity to exercise pressure on

¹ Peter Partner, "The Roman Spring of Clement VII", in *The New York Review of Books*, March 31, 1983, p. 20.

the Roman throne, afforded him by the Spanish possessions inside Italy—the Kingdom of Naples and the Duchy of Milan. Still, it also gave impulse to the Pope's mostly covert but also sometimes overt hostility towards most of the emperor's plans and actions. In fact, the latter had no allies he could depend upon, for the support of England (prior to the enthronement of Elizabeth I) was also highly unreliable.

In the 1540s, Charles V had had to apply considerable effort to involve Pope Paul III in the war against the Protestant princes. The Pope, who had been neutral in the war between Charles V and Francis I to the former's patent disgruntlement, consented to an alliance with the emperor in a drive to root out heresy in exchange for various concessions. The alliance was formalised in June 1546, but already at the beginning of 1547 Paul III began to have second thoughts about the wisdom of his move—if Charles V should triumph over his enemies in Germany, he would gain political control over the Roman throne. At the Council of Trent, which gathered in 1545, Rome and the emperor clashed, especially after the latter achieved his greatest successes in 1546. Paul III tried to exploit the support of the French king and accused the emperor of concealing the religious character of the war against the German Protestants. In reply, Charles V declared to the apostolic nuncio that he had not mentioned the Pope in his manifesto because he was hated for his evil deeds not only in Germany but also in many other countries of the Christian world.

Paul III disputed the right of the German Diet to sanction the terms of a compromise peace which Charles V was trying to conclude with the German Protestants. The Diet, he said, was a secular assembly and would thereby usurp the powers of the Council of Trent.

Such collisions dragged out for years and years, continuing also under the successors of Paul III and Charles V. The emperor sought reforms of the Catholic Church that might weaken the resistance of the Protestant camp, while the Pope was looking for solution to various questions of religious dogma, was

eager to strengthen the powers of the Roman throne, though this was unacceptable even for a considerable section of German Catholics.

The relations between the emperor and the Pope continued to deteriorate right up to the death of Paul III in 1550, when the controversy between Charles V and the Protestant camp in Germany was at its height. Paul IV, enthroned in Rome in 1555, hated the Spanish and hoped to undermine their control of Naples and Milan. Carlo Carafa, the Pope's nephew, was the inspirer of Rome's anti-Spanish policy. The Pope elevated this adventurer to whom numerous crimes and murders were being traced, to the office of cardinal.

In October 1555, Paul IV declared war on the emperor, but it did not get under way owing to the armistice concluded between the Empire of Charles V and France. The Pope made desperate efforts to prevail on King Henry II of France to resume hostilities. Italy and the Netherlands again became fields of battle. When Charles V abdicated, the Pope hastened to declare him insane like his mother Joanna (the Mad) of Castile.

In 1557, the Spanish defeated the French at Saint-Quentin, and that very same year, exhausted by the war, both France and Spain declared themselves bankrupt and incapable of repaying their debts. The people of Castile, the mainstay of the Spanish monarchy, as Prince Philip (future King Philip II) wrote back in 1545, were "reduced to such distress and misery that many of them walk naked"¹. The economic turmoil made the hostile sides more pliable and led to the conclusion of the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis in April 1559. This instrument signed by the two strongest Catholic powers was portrayed by many of its contemporaries as the foundation of European peace. To celebrate, Philip II, who had by then already married twice and was twice widower, married Elizabeth, daughter of the French king. (His second marriage, to Mary Tudor who died in 1558, had led to England's joining the camp of the Catholic Counter-Reformation, though not for long.)

¹ H. G. Koenigsberger, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

Did the third marriage of the Spanish king lead to a lasting conciliation between the Hapsburgs and the Valois which would radically strengthen the Catholic camp? Poet Pierre Ronsard expressed his delight at the "divine peace", beautiful as the early dawn, and at the marriage that linked Spain and France with ties of love...

William of Orange, chief of the Dutch opposition, depicted the dynastic marriage of 1559 as a conspiracy against Europe's religious freedom. In fact, however, that peace, though regarded in France as a forced peace, and though Pope Paul IV had promoted it, was least of all a success for the Catholic camp. It ended the first attempt of the Counter-Reformation to secure a military victory crowned by the establishment of a worldwide Catholic empire. And it was no accident that exactly ten years later, Protestantism began to spread widely in a number of European countries, especially in France and the Netherlands.

Even before the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, the Pope, too, was to have sued for peace, and was only spared this by the attempts of Philip II, who ascended the Spanish throne in 1556, to turn the Roman pontiff into his obedient partner. The Duke of Alva, the Spanish general who became the bloodstained viceroy of the Netherlands, arrived in Rome in the autumn of 1557 to kneel before the Pope and beg for peace on his knees. He demanded that Spanish supremacy over Italy should be unconditionally recognised. In 1559, Paul IV died, and the new Pope, Pius IV, announced publicly that his predecessor had been murdered by his own nephew. Then, after the farce of a trial, he sent Cardinal Carafa to the gallows.

Charles V passed away on September 21, 1558, in the monastery of San Jeronimo de Yuste in Extremadura. Some twenty days before his death, he had asked for mass to be performed for the repose of his soul¹. This was also the funeral of the universal mon-

¹ Some biographers of the emperor declared this episode a legend. It has been now proved, however, that it did take place in August 1558 (Philippe Erlanger, *Charles Quint*, pp. 379-380).

archy, the elusive goal that Charles had pursued all his life. To be sure, his successor was not at all inclined to so interpret the experience of the early half of the turbulent 16th century.

A Sinister Trinity

Dominant in the Middle Ages was the view that while non-Christians could be tolerated (for otherwise any form of coexistence with Islam would have been impossible), Christians, who had fallen into heresy, could not. Thomas of Aquino maintained that heretics deserved to be executed, for were not counterfeitors sentenced to death. Distortion of the faith that gave life to the soul was, indeed, a much fouler crime than forging money. Pagans did not see the light, whereas heretics had turned away from it and had thereby committed a crime against the Holy Ghost and their own conscience. Thomas of Aquino added that heretics should be forced, even by physical coercion, to do what they had promised and keep what they had once acknowledged. And this view Catholicism has maintained down the centuries. This was the reason why Pope Gregory XVI had declared freedom of conscience a madness in 1832, and why in 1864 it was officially condemned by Rome.

The ambient conflict caused far-reaching changes in the Pope's policy. In the decades prior to the Reformation it was shaped, and perhaps predominantly, by the interests of the papal state rather than the ecumenical interests of the Church. This had prompted the Pope to strike up alliances with any enemy of Charles V, and to gloat over the emperor's setbacks. In the latter half of the century, however, we see a reorientation in papal policy despite the continuing serious frictions with the Hapsburgs (of no small importance was the disintegration of the Empire of Charles V and the division of the Hapsburg dynasty into its Spanish and Austrian branches). The Council of Trent, which was in sitting at intervals from 1545 to 1563, fenced off Catholicism abruptly

from all currents of the Reformation, recognised the Pope's powers all down the line, the Pope's supremacy, even his right to repeal Council decrees. At the centre of Rome's policy was its ferocious persecution of Protestants, suppression of free thought, including most of the legacy of the humanists, a policy of forming new and reorganising old monastic orders, and encouragement of the forcible restoration of Catholicism in countries where the Reformation had triumphed.

But even the decrees of the Council of Trent were not unequivocal in the context of the ambient conflict: they were addressed to consolidating the Catholic camp or buttressing the powers of the Pope, which only aggravated relations between Rome and the Hapsburgs, the two mainstays of the Counter-Reformation. During the Council of Trent, the popes used their spy network to manipulate its debates and to direct them along the desired line. Their secret service determined the intentions of the opposition among the clergy, diverted the discussion to controversies over dogmas and thus avoided the burning problems of Church reform, secured the majority in any voting, spread "desirable" rumours, and so on. This, in a way, was a foretaste of what the Counter-Reformation expected from secret warfare against its enemies.

In the middle of the century the popes of the Renaissance, who had tried to benefit from their headship to extend their secular possessions, those cynical bons vivants and often admirers of humanist education, were replaced by ferocious fanatics who wanted to turn back the wheel of history by means of autos-da-fé, the burning of "seditious" treatises, by secret assassinations, and armed intervention—and all of this for the glory of God. And however angered latter-day Catholic historians may be by such a "simplistic" interpretation, a sinister trinity—the Index of forbidden books, the Inquisition, and the Jesuits—expresses the very essence of papal policy in the latter half of the 16th century.

The strained political situation, deriving from participation in the ambient conflicts, was most

strikingly demonstrated in 16th-century Spain—and this in a country that, it would seem, had reached the pinnacle of power and was shovelling in unprecedentedly large profits from the recently discovered and conquered territories of the New World.

At the same time, Spain stood for the Inquisition which, in a way, gave expression to the Spanish crown's unquenchable thirst for ever new sources of income (here the confiscation of the property of the condemned) and, of course, to its lack of confidence in the strength and reliability of its "rear".

A whole mountain of books has been written about the Spanish Inquisition—those that condemn it, and also apologetic ones (the latter being especially numerous in recent decades). Well-known Catholic historian R. Trevor Davies, listing the virtues of the Suprema, stressed that the Inquisition was never swayed by the privileges of the nobility, that it stood for social justice, that it tended to reduce all people to one status before the law. And US historian Paul J. Hauben writes: "The Spanish Inquisition has been called many things, from the resolute defender of Catholicism to the earliest version of the Nazi Gestapo. Its history is often confounded with racialism, religious tyranny, obnoxious legal procedures, the permanent delaying of Spanish modernization, and other equally regressive matters." Hauben himself, however, holds that the Inquisition was part of Spain's former grandeur, a burning issue in the national conscience and consciousness¹.

One of the widespread errors, though one avoided by professional historians, is to ascribe a direct link to the Inquisition of the late 15th and 16th centuries with its prototype created more than two and a half centuries earlier to combat medieval heresies. The es-

¹ *The Spanish Inquisition*, ed. by Paul J. Hauben, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1969, p. 1. Cf. Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition*, The New American Library, New York, 1965; Jean Plaidy, *The Rise of the Spanish Inquisition*, Robert Hale Ltd., London, 1959; Pierre Dominique, *L'inquisition*, Librairie académique Perrin, Paris, 1969, etc., as well as the latest Marxist monograph by I. R. Grigulevich, *History of the Inquisition*, Moscow, 1970 (in Russian).

tablishment of the first Inquisition as a judiciary body dates to 1233; its purpose was to root out the Albigensian heresy in Southern France. Rome controlled this Inquisition, which left behind grim memories of its many tens of thousands of innocent victims, through the leaders of the Dominican order. Yet its activity had been confined chiefly to the southern part of France.

In the 16th century, the Inquisition sought to extend its sinister activity to all Europe and the overseas possessions of the European powers, for now the Suprema had become one of the leading forces in the ambient conflict, though in the 15th century it was considered an institution that had long lost significance. Hardly anyone in those days could have predicted the ominous role that the new tribunal with the old appellation would be called upon to play in the life of the succeeding generations. Established in 1478 and blessed by Pope Sixtus IV, who was formally its head, the Spanish Inquisition was, in fact, from the very beginning shielded against interference by Rome and completely controlled by the Spanish kings. (The Roman Inquisition came into being more than half a century after the Spanish, in 1542, at the height of the ambient conflict.) The Spanish Inquisition consisted of 22 tribunals located in Spain and in Spain's European and overseas possessions, and guided by the supreme tribunal, the Suprema.

The personnel of the Inquisition comprised "staff" officials, including judges, theological consultants and wardens, and "non-staff" officials, the familiars. Unlike the judges, most of the familiars did not belong to the clergy and often kept secret their services for the Inquisition. These people, who were paid "piece rates", acted as policemen or secret agents whose job it was to determine whom the punishing sword of the Inquisition could turn against most profitably.

The Inquisition strove to gain public prestige. Its organisations, like the Fraternity of Saint Peter the Martyr, embraced even such people as Lope de Vega, the celebrated playwright. The old Inquisition persecuted those who had openly dropped away from

Rome after their ancestors had for centuries practised Catholicism. The Spanish Inquisition turned against the Moorish and Judaic populations (the Moriscos and the Marranos) who had been converted to Christianity by force—at risk of death or banishment. These “new” Christians—some of whom secretly continued to practise their previous religion and retained their mother tongue, habitual customs and dress—were eager to demonstrate in public their loyalty to the Catholic Church.

The old Inquisition punished heretics. The Spanish Inquisition first had to turn its victims into heretics, or, more precisely, into people who resumed the practice of Islam or Judaism, in order to justify persecution. For this one reason, torture was not simply a tribute to the times, as the latest apologists of the Suprema would have us believe, but the chief means of attaining its goal. That goal was to terrorise the “new” Christians and then plunder them, with the royal treasury confiscating their property on the pretext of rooting out heresy. Torture was not, as it were, a means of punishing someone known to be guilty—it created the guilt of any captive, extracting all desired confessions from him. The examples were so awesome and frightening that false evidence, even “voluntary” self-denunciations, were assured.

The same purpose was served by the autos-da-fé, the public executions. Torture was the premise for the successful application of all other methods of inquiry—even in those cases when it was not used. Single confinement, total isolation from other members of the family, secrecy as regards witnesses of the prosecution, services of advocates appointed by the Inquisition who saw their role exclusively in prompting the accused to confess—all these and many other well-known features of the Inquisition were ultimately based on fear of the rack or the water torture, specially recommended by the tribunal as methods that caused no bleeding. Fear of the investigation was stronger than fear of the eventual punishment, whether a lashing, the galleys, even agonising death at the stake.

The thing that struck the eye was not any desire

to determine the guilt of the accused, may it even be a "guilt" only in the eyes of the Suprema, but the foolproof system of obtaining confessions from anyone whom the tribunal wished to see guilty. The Inquisition brutally persecuted as "Lutheran heresy" everything that departed only an iota from orthodoxy, which itself, however, was not always clearly defined. Suffice it to say that the Suprema had twice incarcerated Ignatius of Loyola, the future founder of the Society of Jesus, on suspicion of heresy. Even the head of the Spanish Church, the Archbishop of Toledo, spent 17 years (from 1559 to 1576) in the prisons of the Inquisition on a deliberately fabricated charge of leanings towards heresy.

There were really very few genuine heretics. In 1558, small groups of Protestants (strictly speaking, people who favoured a few reforms within the framework of Catholicism) were discovered in Seville and Valladolid. Cruel reprisals followed. On October 8, 1559, King Philip II accompanied by his brother Don John of Austria and his son, attending an auto-da-fé, drew his sword and exclaimed, "If my son ever fell into heresy I would myself fetch the firewood to burn him". Some of the convicted, when led to the stake, had a wooden gag in their mouth to prevent them from expounding their heretical views to the crowd. Protestants were burned at the stake in Seville, Toledo, Saragossa, and other towns.¹

Of late, Western historians are inclined to minimise the number of victims of the Spanish Inquisition. By the latest estimates, the Inquisition had handled 150,000 cases between 1550 and 1700. Out of the 42,000 cases whose records are extant, 75 per cent concerned heresy, while the rest were offences against morality; 687 of the accused were executed, and another 619 burnt in effigy, having either escaped or died in prison². Even if we trusted these figures, we would hardly underestimate the tre-

¹ Martin Philippson, *La Contre-Révolution religieuse au XVIe siècle*, Librairie C. Muquardt, Brussels, 1884, pp. 268-269.

² Geoffrey Parker, *Europe in Crisis. 1598-1648*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1979, pp. 49-50.

mendous demoralising effect that the Suprema exercised on life in Spain and other countries. It was not the spread of heresy that led to the establishment of the Inquisition. It was rather the other way round: the establishment of the Inquisition tended to maintain heresy. Its purpose was not eliminating heresy among Moriscos and Marranos, but exterminating these ethnic groups. In substance, they had no way of escaping inclusion in the fatal lists of those from whom the Inquisition wished to obtain a confession of guilt.

Often, a man aroused suspicion not by reason of his views but of his genealogy. And suspicion of sincerity in the profession of the Catholic faith was equivalent to doubts about his loyalty to the state, to suspicions that he was a secret agent or potential ally of an external enemy. And that meant that the enemy of the Church and the State was spotted even if there was not the least hint of conscious or deliberate opposition, whether of heresy or any other reprehensible act. The Suprema always had a sufficient supply of heretics, however hard these latter wished and tried to be devout Catholics. In Spain this was a case of demand exceeding supply, because "voluntary" heretics were obviously too few, and the requisite number was created by the Inquisition itself. (Small wonder the confessions wrung from the accused always indicated a fairly large number of spurious accomplices, and here, too, the behaviour of any of them usually had no bearing on whether they were prosecuted or not). Officially, however, the Inquisition never admitted that it punished people for anything other than deliberate crimes against the faith.

The prevailing situation prompted persecution not for people's convictions but for their origins, and created notions and practices in 16th-century Spain that were in many ways similar to those of racism of the 19th and 20th. Given the medieval system of estates, a man's origins determined his place in society. But pure blood was prized above all if it was the pure blood of nobles, of people in high station, irrespective of nationality. The medieval system of values ad-

mitted of inter-ethnic marriages between social equals but ruled out marriages between social estates.

The Spanish notion of pure blood naturally did not overlook differences in status or estate. But it also forbade marriage within estates between the old and the "new" Christians—the Moriscos and Marranos—and even marriage to persons who had them among their ancestors. This prevented assimilation of the "new" Christians and, as it were, perpetuated the danger they constituted in the eyes of the authorities to Church and State. Nor was it enough to claim that you had no "new" Christians (let alone Mohammedans or Jews) in your family; neither could you have any relatives condemned by the Inquisition. In due course, "new" Christians were forbidden to be members of Inquisition tribunals, to be university professors, or to hold certain of the offices in the civil service. To be sure, exceptions to the rule were made even under the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella, and under Philip II, who had many a "new" Christian holding high office. This applied also to the first general, the Inquisitor Torquemada. But these exceptions only obscured the ongoing dismissal of persons who had no claim to pure blood.

Yet more than 300,000 managed to survive in spite of the persecutions. Need I say, however, that in Spain the very idea of pure blood was fiction, because an intensive process of ethnic mixing had been going on there for centuries. The certificates that were issued for payment of a special fee if witnesses vouched for pure origin, fostered bribery and false evidence, all sorts of frauds, and squaring of accounts. And unlawfully obtained certificates became an excuse for blackmail and fresh extortions. During the reign of Philip II, Spanish government officials gradually came to view the population in the territories they administered—be it in Europe or in America—as people of an inferior breed. A contemporary of Spanish origin wrote in 1557 that his countrymen, especially Castilians, pretended that they were the children of God while the rest of the human race was mud under their boots. The Duke of Alva, for one, dismissed the magistrates of Brussels as "scum", and had the same

low opinion of the Dutch nobility, who for him were poltroons of only average or even below average capacity, to say nothing of all other Dutchmen.¹

Alongside the Inquisition there was the Jesuit order. In many languages the very word Jesuit came to stand for a crafty, intriguing, equivocating person. Much has been written about the Society of Jesus. It was denounced by liberal 19th-century historians and is extolled by present-day clerical and conservative writers. At the height of the cold war, the journal *America*, the chief organ of the US Jesuits, wrote of Ignatius Loyola and the other founders of the Society of Jesus that “today, in mid-twentieth-century America, these names still glow with vivid strength and vigor”². And speaking at the 39th UN General Assembly on September 24, 1984, US President Ronald Reagan described Ignatius Loyola as a great spiritual leader and a preacher of love and peace. But who, by and large, does not know the methods of Jesuits, who does not know Jesuitism? Pierre Jean de Béranger quotes the devil himself in a song as advising his host to follow in the footsteps of the holy fathers from the Society of Jesus.

Need I go into the way the Jesuits tried to seize control of education, especially of the rising generations of the élite, how they tried to fanaticise the Parisian mob, how they tried to become the confessors at most of the European royal courts, how they decreed the death of whole nations (as they did in the case of the insurgent Netherlands in 1568), how they modelled impostors to seize the “vacant” throne of Muscovy, how they tried to organise underground printing plants in Protestant countries, to stage manage courtesans, to assume the disguise of Buddhists or fire worshippers in distant lands, to make slaves of Indians in Paraguay, and many many other things. And the preferred method in all this vigorous activity was to organise or orchestrate innumerable plots.

¹ Geoffrey Parker, *Spain and the Netherlands, 1559-1659*, Collins, London, 1979, p. 160.

² *America*, July 21, 1951, p. IV.

For all the variety of concrete aims and tactics, the main goal of the Jesuit order was victory in the ambient conflict. The Jesuits' task of tasks, therefore, was to enlist on the side of the Counter-Reformation all forces that could in any way be enlisted for so pious a cause. And that was why the order considered the situation in any country mainly in the light of how it affected its main objective. The order was not content with the mere triumph of Catholicism in a country; what it wanted was the triumph of militant Catholicism, first of all militant in relation to the Protestant states. The Jesuits displayed extreme zeal in the papacy's campaign against "harmful" books and writings.

The moment the ambient conflict broke out, the situation for book publishers putting out the works of the humanists deteriorated abruptly. In 1530, booksellers complained to Erasmus that in the south of Germany some time before it had been easier to sell 3,000 copies of a book than it had now become to sell 600.

The only books that were being published in ever greater numbers were theological works. In the first twelve years since Luther translated the New Testament, his translation and others were put out in 85 printings. But, understandably, Rome was not pleased with the publication of theological books if they were written or produced by Protestants. For centuries the Church had been banning works which departed in the least from its ideological positions in past conflicts. In the mid-16th century the Trent Index of Prohibited Books still listed Dante's treatise *De Monarchia* for the very same reason as two and a half centuries before, namely, because it said that the authority of the emperor was derived from God and not from God's vicar on Earth.¹

The Index was an important instrument of the ambient conflict, and an increasing number of books and treatises were being put down in it that had ear-

¹ George Putnam, *The Censorship of the Church of Rome and Its Influence Upon the Production and Distribution of Literature*, Benjamin Blom, New York, 1967, Vol. 1, p. 200.

lier had the approval of the Pope. Following the abolition of indulgences, pamphlets that advertised them were also listed as banned, with the explanation that they had been compiled by scoundrels and ill-wishers who wanted to malign the Holy Church. Many works of the humanists, too, found their way into the Index, including those of Erasmus of Rotterdam, who had so passionately tried to avert the ambient conflict. Pope Paul IV even had his own treatise, one that he had written before he was elected, entered in the Index.

The Spanish censors, to be sure, took pride in being liberal and allowed some of the books categorically banned in Rome, confining themselves to just deleting the "harmful" passages.

Even the armies of the Catholic camp were eager to act as censors. In 1589, Geneva was besieged by the troops of the Duke of Savoy who had made up his mind to wipe out that "cesspool of heresy" once and for all. Nor did the besiegers conceal their intention of destroying the city and especially all its printing plants for putting out heretical books. Though Geneva was unable to field more than about 2,000 men to defend its walls, the siege dragged out for all of nine years and ended with the withdrawal of the Savoyards.

As regards censorship, the Protestant camp responded in kind. Indeed, religious intolerance was a feature of all the belligerents. But it differed depending on who practised it, especially in the 16th century when religion was the other side of politics. The relative toleration of the next period in countries where the bourgeois (capitalist) system had emerged victorious was possible only as a result of the struggle of the mass of the people in revolutionary times that were marked by intolerance. It would therefore be wrong to counterpose the "conservative" Calvinist dogma to Calvinism's revolutionary political role, for the two were indissolubly linked. Calvinist (let alone Lutheran) intolerance, however, was directed not only at opponents on the right, but also at those on the left, that is, at the more radical currents in the Reformation. It is beyond question that Lutheranism

as well as Calvinism had a natural propensity for passing from daring criticism of the Catholic Church to a new orthodoxy no less intolerant than the old and backed up by a Protestant Inquisition no less brutal than that of Spain and Rome, and no less preoccupied in persecuting the ideologues of humanism, those former comrades-in-arms of the early years of the Reformation.

Its new orthodoxy reflected the exploitative nature of the burgher Reformation as the ideology of the rising propertied class. Though each of the main churches persecuted its own "heretics", all of them came down upon the Anabaptists, Antitrinitarians, and the sects that represented the popular current in the Reformation. Small wonder that Luther wrote during the peasant war that it was "a trifle for God to massacre a lot of peasants, when he drowned the whole world with a flood and wiped out Sodom with fire". The repressive machinery of the Reformation was pointed against internal enemies on right and left—the defeated Catholic party, on the one hand, and the followers of the people's Reformation, on the other. But it is beyond question that the excesses of intolerance displayed by the burgher current where its victory was indisputable, as, say, in Geneva, and where it was contested from within and without, were in many ways the consequence of the ambient conflict, which added important external factors to the internal motivations. The ambient conflict gave impulse to a tendency towards a dogmatic ossification of Protestant orthodoxy in the name of buttressing the "rear", and towards suppression of all opponents of the new authorities. This created a climate in which recent allies could easily be portrayed as impediments in the struggle.

The ambient conflict inhibited those aspects of the Reformation that later impelled the secularisation of the life of society and in a certain sense furthered the development of progressive social thought along its long and thorny road from the era of humanism to the century of Enlightenment.

The Ottoman Invasion

Let us go back a hundred years from the mid-16th to the mid-15th century...

In the spring of 1453 a vast army led by Sultan Mohammed II, called the Conqueror, approached Constantinople. It laid siege to the Byzantine capital, from whose walls the beleaguered townsmen searched the horizon for the warships promised by Naples, Venice, and Rome. They could not believe that they would be let down. A brigantine manned by twelve seamen disguised as Turks had been sent to the Greek shore in search of them. But the ships did not arrive. They had never been sent.

The prophecy that an angel would come down from heaven beside the Column of Emperor Constantine the Great and point out a stranger at its foot who, with God's help, would drive off the invaders, never came true. On May 29, after a ferocious attack, the city was seized by the sultan's troops. The last of the Byzantine emperors, Constantine XI Palaeologus, fell in battle. The capture of Constantinople was followed by indiscriminate slaughter of its people, until it occurred to the conquerors that living slaves were better than dead Christians. Something like 50,000 were sold into slavery. The Turkish chronicles relate that 300 Greek monks declared publicly that by gifting victory to the sultan God had shown which religion was true, and thereupon adopted Islam.

The city was systematically sacked: after a house had been searched and stripped of all possessions, a pennant was attached to it, sparing other Turkish detachments the trouble of searching it for hidden treasure.

The many books that survived the havoc of the crusaders' capture of Constantinople in 1204 and sales in the subsequent two and a half centuries, only rarely attracted the greedy eyes of the conquerors. Yet Cardinal Isidore, a Greek eyewitness, informs us that at least 120,000 of ancient manuscripts were lost at the time. Rumours have it that some of the volumes found their way to the library of Mohammed II, but they are unconfirmed. Even a hundred

years later, namely in 1555, we learn from Augier Ghislain de Busbecq, ambassador of King Ferdinand I, younger brother of Emperor Charles V, that he was able to buy Greek manuscripts by the cart-load, even fill the holds of ships with them.

The chief of Pera (Galata), the Genoese merchants' quarter in Constantinople, spared by the Turks, wrote in June 1453, when his impressions of the fall of Byzantium's ancient capital were still fresh, that he was sure Mohammed would march against Rome within two years. And Enea Sylvio Piccolomini, scion of an illustrious Italian family who was elected Pope Pius II, declared at the imperial Diet at Frankfurt that the road for the Turks lay open to Hungary and from there to Germany and Italy.

The brothers of the fallen emperor (Constantine XI Palaeologus), Thomas and Demetrius Palaeologus, who ruled over principalities in Southern Greece, had quarrelled. Out of hatred for Thomas, Demetrius chose to surrender to the Turks. In 1460 he returned to Constantinople after refusing to seek religious asylum in the West. In the new capital of the Ottoman Empire, the sultan granted him a considerable pension and eunuch as honorary bodyguard. Demetrius died there quietly of old age. His daughter was taken into the palace of Mohammed II.

Thomas, whose daughter Sophia (Zoë) married Ivan III, Grand Prince of Muscovy, went to Italy, taking along a precious relic, the head of St Andrew, and was assigned a pension by the Pope and the cardinals of Rome. One of his sons, Manuel Palaeologus, returned to Constantinople, and Mohammed II made him a courtier and gave him two slave girls as a gift. Thomas's other son married an Italian courtesan and sold his less than illusory rights to the Byzantine throne first to the king of France, and then to the king of Aragon. It is just one step from the sublime to the ridiculous, as we see, though, to be sure, these words were spoken all of three and a half centuries after the end of the Palaeologuses.

The Constantinople tragedy made a deep and mournful impression on Western Europe. Many generations of Europeans were thereafter affected by

what may be called the crusading spirit, something that might even have been described as specific ideology. The capture by "infidels" of Christian countries, notably Greece, the cradle of European culture, was bitterly lamented by the humanists.

Yet the fact that the Christian states had not rushed to the aid of Constantinople was clear evidence of their reluctance to make war for the faith if their particular and immediate interests were not affected.

These days there are authors in the West, notably Hugh R. Trevor-Roper,¹ who tend to compare the confrontation of the socialist and capitalist worlds with the clash between East and West in the Renaissance period. "Indeed there are some remarkable parallels," acquiesces Robert Schwoebel. "In both cases one finds not only a struggle between competing powers but a conflict of ideologies, and contrasting social, economic and political systems... The fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries were filled with battles between the Turks and Christian powers. Full scale wars alternated with limited operations and with periods of uneasy peace comparable to our cold wars. But hostilities were also interrupted by diplomacy and peaceful relations. The protagonists negotiated, traded, and even engaged in cultural exchange. And whether at peace or war they were sensitive to matters touching prestige and public opinion; hence all parties promoted their policies with propaganda at home and abroad."²

True, Schwoebel admits that the similarities were offset by some distinctions, but defines the latter incorrectly and omits the main ones which derive from the fact that the East-West conflict of the 16th century unfolded within one and the same feudal social system. Whereas in the 20th century, in an entirely different epoch, for the first time in history, the historical contest between capitalism and social-

¹ See Hugh R. Trevor-Roper, "A Case of Co-existence: Christendom and the Turks", in *Historical Essays*, Macmillan & Co., London, 1957.

² Robert Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent: The Renaissance Image of the Turk. 1453-1517*, B. de Graaf, Nieuwkoop, 1967, p. IX.

ism involves a progressive camp consisting of non-exploiting states.

The West's grudging political support of declining Byzantium was not accidental. The sack of Constantinople coincided in time with the concluding stage of the Hundred Years War. Contemporaries, however, did not consider its ending final. For the French king this was a convenient pretext to reject a crusade against the Turks. At the French court, indeed, only the dauphin who in due course became King Louis XI, a man of perfidy and intrigue, showed an interest. And he, too, after his enthronement, launched a resolute struggle against the biggest feudal lords whose power tended to lessen the authority of the crown, notably Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, and his successor Charles the Bold, both of whom were, at least in theory, advocates of crusades. Much the same may be said of Frederick III, emperor of Germany.

At certain stages of the ambient conflict, especially at its beginning (here the mid-15th century) or renewal (after a long interval), and also at its end, there was a difference of opinion between its ideologues and the ruling circles. The former were either a jump ahead of their time, so that their calls for participation in the ambient conflict failed to win sympathy among the power-holders, or lagged behind and insisted on participation in the crusades, whose futility or harm was seen by those who made the political decisions.

Initially, the Turkish conquests in Asia Minor and Greece evoked but little response among the West European monarchs. Soon after the death of Sultan Murad II in 1451, the humanist Francesco Filelfo called on Charles VII, the French king, to put himself at the head of another crusade. His message gives a good idea of the mentality of the ideologues of the new ambient conflict — exaggeration of the danger presented by the enemy, underestimation of the latter's military resources and generals (here Murad's son Mohammed II, who captured Constantinople two years later), and exaggeration of the capabilities of potential friends and confederates in the enemy

camp (here the Christian subjects of the Turkish sultan), and of the readiness of the main states of the contemplated coalition to put aside their differences. Filelfo planned the participation in an alliance formed under the aegis of Charles VII even of the English, although the Hundred Years War was not yet over and London had not yet abandoned plans of recapturing the large recently lost regions of the French Kingdom.

The influence which intertwining ambient conflicts exercise on each other varies greatly. More, one ambient conflict is liable to exercise intrinsically contradictory influences on another, the historian being forced to establish which of the influences predominates. Besides, we must remember that the influence may be confined to just the ideological field, operating through the system of international relations, that is, the political realm and, to some extent, also the socio-economic. (This was true, for example, of the clash between Christendom and Islam in the Mediterranean in the 7th century. In fact, Belgian historian Henri Pirenne for this very reason considers the 7th century as the time of the collapse of the Antiquity World and the time when the Middle Ages began.)

Certainly, despite tenacious legends to the contrary, the Turkish conquest of Constantinople did not cut off the trade routes to the East (they lay through Egypt, which was not conquered until the 1510s), and could not, therefore, have served as the immediate impulse for the discovery of America. Still, such impulse may have derived from the overall conflict between the European states and the Ottoman Empire, which grew to large proportions towards the end of the 15th century when it became obvious that the conflict would spread to the Balkans and the whole eastern part of the Mediterranean.

The effects of one of the ambient conflicts may sharpen, extend, deepen or, on the contrary, blunt, obscure and gradually resolve, the other conflict. In some situations, the old conflict is retained as the form, the screen, the diversion that draws attention away from a new conflict. To be sure, the new con-

flict is not always predominant over the old: sometimes it is subordinate to it from beginning to end. This depends on many factors, and above all on how profoundly the conflict in question reflects the leading antagonism of the epoch.

For one hundred and ninety-two years (since the restoration of the Byzantine Empire in 1261) the waves of Turkish expansionism broke up against the walls of Constantinople. The following 230 years, from 1453 to 1683, were a time of a now mounting, now somewhat weaker, but never disappearing threat of a Turkish assault on Western Europe. It was a conflict within one and the same social system. True, in the 15th century Turkish feudalism was still passing from its early to its developed stage. In that respect, the Turks lagged behind Western Europe by approximately 400 years. In Western Europe the same transition had occurred in the 11th century. Engels noted that an Ottoman invasion was "a threat to the whole of European development"¹, adding that Turkish or any other Eastern rule was incompatible with capitalist society.

Turkish conquests were usually accompanied by plunder and carnage, and, subsequently, a gradual tightening of the tax burden. But, in the earlier stages, taxation was not always heavier than the peasantry had paid to the local feudal lords. As for religious toleration, the Turks differed favourably from conquerors who were spurred by the crusading spirit. True, forcible conversion to Islam was practised, but on a different scale in different conquered lands—usually depending on the conditions in which the conquest occurred. As a rule, the Turkish government was not interested in winning new converts for Islam, because the Christian population paid an additional tax and children were forcibly taken from its midst to be raised as future soldiers, janizaries, of the sultan's guard. I might add that this blood duty was especially burdensome in the 16th century, but was gradually reduced to quite small dimensions in

¹ Frederick Engels, "The Magyar Struggle", in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, 1977, p. 232.

the 17th—at the very time when Europe got to know about it and it became the favourite accusation flung at the Turkish conquerors. But the duty was rarely resisted, for the enlistment of Christian children in the corps of janizaries was often the prologue to a military or court career that was envied even by Turks.

In some places the Turks turned some of the churches into mosques. They forbade the ringing of bells and introduced other similar restrictions. As a rule, however, they preferred to use the Christian clergy as an instrument of government, an appendix of the Turkish administration. In any case, the Orthodox Church was treated with far greater toleration by the Turks than in Catholic countries or by the Vatican.

What strikes the eye is the correlation of the Turkish advance and the peasant wars. There was no direct link between the peasant wars in France and England, on the one hand, and Turkish expansion, on the other. But, beyond question, an indirect link did exist—through the effect these wars had on the system of international relations. In the case of the other major popular movements of that time, such as the uprising in Hungary in 1514 and the peasant war in Germany in 1525, their connection with the subsequent Turkish invasion was more direct. The attempts to step up the feudal oppression which set off far-flung peasant revolts, saw the ruling class concentrate its main forces on suppressing the masses, with the effect that this reduced their strength and will to repulse the external enemy.

At the Walls of Vienna

In the early period of the reign of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566), when the Ottoman Empire reached the zenith of its power, the main direction of Turkish expansion changed. After successful campaigns in Persia and the conquest of Egypt, Suleiman turned his eyes on South-Eastern Europe. Belgrade, which had for many decades successfully repulsed Turkish attacks, was captured in 1521.

The road to Hungary lay open, and through that country to Central Europe. Rhodes was seized in 1522, paving the way for another Turkish lunge in the Mediterranean.

The sultan had his spies everywhere. Usually they were Christians who had kept their conversion to Islam secret. The Turks themselves were poor spies, all too often betrayed by their ignorance of European customs, morals and religious rites. One Turkish agent, for example, reported the following about the sacrifice of the Mass, which he attended: "They kill a Lamb and drink the Blood."¹ The information obtained from the mid-century on through the bank of Joseph Miques-Mendes, founded in Constantinople, which had ties with merchants in Venice, Seville, Antwerp and other trading centres, was considerably more useful.

On August 29, 1526, in the Battle of Mohacs, the sultan's army routed the Hungarian troops. A large part of Hungary came under the Turks who, as usual, turned back in September to avoid a winter campaign. After the defeat at Mohacs, the Hungarians could not hope to face up to the advancing Ottomans unless the royal throne was transferred to the Hapsburgs. But the Hapsburgs' claims to supremacy in Europe distracted them from resisting the Turkish offensive (to repulse which was vitally necessary for the people of Hungary). What was more, the policy of the Hapsburgs, which brought them to grips with France, prompted an alliance between Paris and Constantinople. This ruled out any chance of French assistance for those in Hungary who sought to fight on two fronts—against the Turks, on the one hand, and the Holy Roman Empire, on the other.

On September 21, 1529, Suleiman's armies accompanied by the auxiliary troops of King Zapolya enthroned in Hungary by the Turks, approached the walls of Vienna. According to some estimates, the besiegers totalled 240,000 and had 300 siege guns. The garrison of Vienna numbered 22,000 with 12 guns.

¹ Jack Beeching, *The Galleys at Lepanto*, Hutchinson, London, 1982, p. 146.

Archduke Ferdinand (the future Austrian king) had left for Linz before the siege in order to have continuous contact with Emperor Charles V, his brother, who was in Italy. Ferdinand's courtiers believed that once the Turks captured Vienna, they would thrust into Germany within the next three years. But the siege dragged out, winter approached, and on October 14 Suleiman ordered a withdrawal. The Turkish invasion was repulsed (for a very long time, as it turned out), though Ferdinand believed that the sultan would resume his attempt to capture Vienna the following year.

The siege of Vienna stunned the imagination of the Europeans. For eight centuries—from the battle at Tours near Poitiers in 732, in which Charles Martel repulsed an Arab attack—no West European country (east of the Pyrenees) had been subjected to invasion from the Muslim East.

True, in the latter half of the 15th and the early 16th century the topic of the rising Turkish peril was continuously debated in academic works. It is assumed that the German word for newspaper (*Zeitung*) was used for the first time in print in an anti-Turkish leaflet published in 1502 about the Venetians' struggle against the Turks, entitled "Newe Zeytung von Orient und Auffgang".¹

Calling on the German princes, including Protestants, to contribute money for repulsing the Turkish invasion, Charles V was compelled to sign a peace with them in 1532. That, in turn, made it easier for the Protestant princes to form the League of Schmalkalden.

Following the Turkish withdrawal from the walls of Vienna, the hostilities shifted to the border between Austria and Turkish-occupied Hungary. After 1562, the border between the possessions of the Hapsburg and the Porte remained essentially the same for a whole century, though the everlasting armed clashes along the frontier often developed into large battles and there was a continuous danger of renewed

¹ Robert Schwoebel, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

Ottoman invasion. Busbecq, the Holy Roman Emperor's ambassador in Constantinople, warned in the early 1560s that the sultan had placed his yoke upon everything from the Persian border to the outskirts of Vienna¹.

From the 1560s on, the main direction of Turkish expansion shifted back to the Mediterranean. The Porte already had control of large stretches of the Mediterranean coast, but the Turkish onslaught continued. On 16th-century maps south was usually placed at the top of the sheet, and north at the bottom. The huge crescent of Turkish possessions in the north of the African continent, thus, hung menacingly over Europe. The ruler of Algeria, Khaireddin Barbarossa, whom Suleiman had placed at the head of the Turkish navy, struck fear into the hearts of people on the western coast of the Mediterranean. Spanish attempts at counter-attacking the coastal cities of Northern Africa ended, by and large, in total defeat. Charles V at the head of 20,000 crack troops landed near Algiers in 1541, but was soon compelled to lift the siege and, upon losing nearly half his army, barely escaped with his life from the pursuing Turkish ships.

In 1560, Spain launched a naval expedition to recapture the city of Tripoli, which was relatively close to the island of Djerba, and had been seized by the Turks nine years before. But a Turkish squadron overwhelmed the Spanish fleet, with 10,000 men of Philip's army being taken captive to Constantinople.

A new fleet of Spanish galleys, built in the next two years, was almost completely lost in a storm during exercises near Malaga in October 1562. It was not until 1564 that the Spanish navy regained its strength and was able to resume its offensive against Turkish fortifications near Tetuan. Beyond question, this made Philip II agree to concessions in the Netherlands (the recall of Cardinal Granvelle, the chief minister).

¹ Augier Ghislain de Busbecq, *Reysen und Bottschafften beyder Onüberwindlichsten Allermächtigsten Keyser Ferdinandi und Maximiliani II*, Frankfort on the Main, 1596, p. 491.

In the following year, 1565, the Turks laid siege to Malta. The future of the Western Mediterranean now depended on the outcome of that siege. Again, for months, Philip II did not reply to the letters of his sister, Margaret of Parma, who was governess of the Netherlands. But the moment the Turks were compelled to lift the siege, the king rejected all the demands of the Dutch opposition in two letters to Margaret dated October 17 and 20, 1565, expressing full support of the Inquisitors. This was a declaration of war on the disaffected, who responded with a campaign of public disobedience. But again in 1566, the Ottoman navy resumed its offensive, and the moment it attained success, Philip II sent a letter to his sister, instructing her to soften the laws against heretics.

In September 1566, failing to score a final victory, the Ottoman navy returned to Constantinople. Soon, Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent died. Army mutinies and risings in the provinces erupted across his empire. In November 1566, the Spanish government was sure enough of itself to decide to send the most seasoned regiments of its army to the Netherlands under the Duke of Alva, who was a resolute opponent of compromise vis-à-vis the Dutch rebels. But the units did not leave Milan for the Netherlands until June 1567, when it became clear that the Turks would refrain from another offensive. The Turkish navy did not appear in the Western Mediterranean either in 1567 or 1568, enabling Philip II to spend all his resources on the maintenance of Alva's army in the Netherlands.

The connection between this succession of events was totally clear to people in the West European capitals, and doubly so in the Netherlands. William of Orange, for example, wrote to his brother during the Turkish siege of Malta: "The Turks are very threatening which will mean, we believe, that the king will not come [to the Netherlands] this year."¹

The biggest naval battle of the 16th century occurred at Lepanto, near the Greek shore, on Octo-

¹ Geoffrey Parker, *Spain and the Netherlands*, p. 29.

ber 7, 1571. It was the last large battle of galley fleets. Three hundred galleys of the Spanish king and his allies with 80,000 seamen and soldiers aboard, attacked a still more numerous Moslem fleet. The prayers of kneeling soldiers on the Spanish vessels flying flags with a portrayal of Christ, mingled with the battle cries of the Mohammedan braves. A cruel battle ensued, lasting for several hours, in which both sides tried to ram and board enemy ships and destroy their crews in hand-to-hand fighting. The battle culminated in a rout of the Turks, with the victors sinking or capturing three out of every four enemy galleys. In the introduction to his *Novelas Ejemplares*, Cervantes wrote, referring to himself in the third person, that his arm was mutilated in the naval Battle of Lepanto by a bullet from an arquebus, and added that though some may have thought the loss of an arm ugly, in his eyes it was beautiful because inflicted in one of the most famous battles ever known.

Titian painted "Religion Succoured by Spain", portraying Philip II as the divine instrument punishing infidels as well as heretics.

In various countries, the victory at Lepanto was regarded as a victory of Christianity over Islam and not merely as a Catholic victory or a victory of Spain alone. In his childhood, James I, King of Scotland (son of Mary Stuart), reared as a Protestant, wrote an ode extolling the Lepanto victory. He was at once reprimanded for it by the Scottish Church, which said that "it was far contrary to his degree and religion, like a mercenary poet, to pen a work in praise of a foreign Papist bastard",¹ that is, Don Juan of Austria, an illegitimate son of Charles V.

But even after the Battle of Lepanto, Spain was compelled to maintain a 9,000-man army in Sardinia and activate a reserve corps of 10,000 to 12,000 men to buttress its positions in other parts of the Mediterranean.

Soon after Lepanto, France offered alliance to the sultan. The Duke of Alva, Spanish governor of the

¹ Jack Beeching, op. cit., p. 226.

Netherlands, wrote of the French, "They would be happy to lose one eye if we lost two."¹ And Venice concluded a separate treaty with the Porte, receiving permission to resume its Levantine trade in exchange for the payment of a contribution.

The leaders of the Dutch uprising against the Spanish yoke sent ambassadors to Constantinople back in 1566 and 1567, but the Turks confined themselves to mere promises of aid. In the early 1570s, William of Orange, who already had the support of certain European powers, tried to obtain the aid of the sultan and of the bey of Algeria for his plan of liberating the Netherlands. In 1574, the sultan sent a large fleet to capture Tunis, which weakened the Spanish hand in the fight against the Dutch rebels.

The clashes between the Porte and Iran also acquiring the features of an ambient conflict kept distracting the Turks from Europe, all the more so because, by tradition, any large Turkish army was to be led by the sultan himself, which entirely ruled out the conduct of hostilities, if not a war, on two fronts at once. The wars waged by Selim I against Shah Ismail of Iran prevented the Turkish sultan from extending his conquests in Europe. (This even prompted Emperor Charles V to negotiate an alliance against the Turks with the shah.) And offensives and plans of offensives in Europe nursed by Suleiman the Magnificent, suffered setback after setback (in 1533, 1548, and 1552) owing to his military campaigns against Shah Tahmasp I.

In the mid-16th century the Belgian, Busbecq, the earlier mentioned imperial ambassador, wrote: "When the Turks have settled with Persia they will fly at our throats, supported by the might of the whole East; how unprepared we are, I dare not say." That is why already during the reign of Pope Julius II (1503-1513), Rome sounded out the possibilities for cooperating with Iran despite the obstacles then created by the remoteness of that potential ally (it took years rather than months to deliver messages, let alone to send diplomats, with the situation

¹ Jack Beeching, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

changing cardinally in the meantime). After the Pope, similar attempts were made by Venice, and then by Emperor Charles V and his brother Ferdinand.

The Battle of Lepanto was not as decisive as originally depicted by the triumphant members of the anti-Turkish league and, often, by subsequent generations of writers. It did not take long for the defeated Turks to recover. True, in 1572 and 1573 the Spanish scored some serious successes in Northern Africa. In the autumn of 1573, a squadron under Don Juan of Austria captured Tunis and Bizerta. But Don Juan lacked the means to assert his rule. In the summer of 1574, a new Turkish fleet, no less strong than the one which took part in the Battle of Lepanto, recaptured Tunis and returned to Constantinople in triumph.

Contemporaries did not know, of course, that this triumph was the last in the history of the Ottoman navy. The reasons for it were rooted in the internal development of the Porte, not any remote consequences of Lepanto. On the way home, the Turkish ships cruised about near Corfu, which revived old fears in Venice.

The huge Turkish fleet threatened Sicily. In 1574 Tunis, and in 1576 Morocco, came under Ottoman rule. Philip II sent a secret agent to Constantinople to negotiate an armistice. It was the death of the Iranian shah and the Porte's preoccupation with the conflict against Iran that prompted the sultan to agree to a cease-fire in March 1577, followed by a formal armistice in 1580. So the plans of Spanish supremacy in the Mediterranean through victory over the Porte burst like a soap bubble.

A new war between Turkey and Iran, as I have already said, broke out in 1578, and continued until 1590. The best armies of the Porte took part in it throughout the 12 years. Already from the mid-16th century the question of an alliance with Iran was openly discussed as a means of salvation from the Turkish threat. Philip II, who had added Portugal to his possessions, tried to establish more dependable ties with Iran, through the Portuguese colonies in Africa and, according to some reports, even supplied

the shah with experienced workmen to cast guns. And in 1585, there was serious talk among the foes of the Hapsburgs about a secret alliance between Philip II and the Iranian shah, with the object of dividing the world (Spain getting Europe, and the shah getting Asia). There were also rumours that Shah Abbas (1586-1628) intended to adopt Christianity and that he was already wearing a cross under his clothes as a sign of respect for Jesus Christ. Strategic motives were closely interlaced with prospects of profitable trading, which aroused a special interest among English and Dutch merchants. The "Iranian card" was stubbornly played in the early 17th century and during the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), of which more in subsequent chapters.

The "Golden Age" of Persecutions

In Spain, for hundreds of years Christians and Moors had to learn to live side by side despite the wars between Christian and Muslim duchies fought over the centuries (from the beginning of the 8th and almost until the end of the 15th century). Even after the wars ended, in 1492, and territories earlier seized by the Moors were reconquered, the authorities and the Church initially displayed a degree of toleration towards Muslims, though fairly soon a drive was begun to convert them to Christianity.

The situation changed after Spain became involved in the conflict with Islam or, more precisely, with the Ottoman Empire and its satellites. I might add that this occurred after most of the Moors had in the early 16th century accepted Christianity, though many remained clandestinely true to the faith of their ancestors. Besides the Christian names that children received at their christening, they were secretly given Arab names. Some of the Moors faithful to Islam, started a rising in the hills of Espadana in 1526, which was put down at great cost with the aid of German mercenary troops.

The government of Charles V was forced to set relatively moderate terms of surrender: if the rebels

accepted Christianity they would be allowed to retain their customs and the jurisdiction of the Holy Tribunal would not extend to them for a period of 40 years. For some time after this, the authorities were mostly concerned about the new Christians paying their taxes promptly. But as Spain was involved in the two main international conflicts (against Protestantism and Islam), the situation changed. Christian landlords were pleased that the Moriscos, their tenants, were enlarging their incomes. The government and the Church, on the other hand, watched with alarm as the wealth and number of the new Christians increased (population growth among Moriscos was greater than among the Spanish).

The authorities were prompted to step up repressions against the "unfaithful" subjects of the Spanish Crown. Little by little, people were taught to look down on the Moriscos as rivals taking land from tenants who were old Christians, drawing away customers from artisans and traders. The suspicion of the Inquisition was aroused by the fact that many of the Moriscos had arms which they refused to surrender to the authorities. To be sure, the Moriscos planned no new uprising against the Spanish government. They kept their weapons upon the wish of the magnates of Aragon (a historical region incorporated in Spain), who maintained armed detachments of vassals, among whom many were Moriscos.

The Moriscos were said to be possessed of all sorts of vices. The *Novelas Ejemplares* of Cervantes contained this widespread opinion: "It would be a miracle to find a Moor who sincerely believed in our Christian law: all they are concerned about is to put away money and preserve what they have. That is the only reason why they work, and even deny themselves food: laying hold of a real, they sentenced it to life imprisonment; in this way, earning continuously and spending nothing, they collected and kept tremendous sums out of the money circulated in Spain. They are Spain's piggy bank, its moths, its magpies and ferrets; they collect everything, put away everything, consume everything. We should not forget that they are many and that every

day they earn a little and put away their earnings (and a slow fever erodes life just as strongly as a quick one); the Moors multiply all the time, and the number of those who hide them grows all the time too, and experience shows that they multiply and will continue to multiply endlessly."

The Crown and clergy regarded the Moriscos as potential agents of a dangerous enemy inside the country. Actually, however, this was not the case. The Moriscos would have been a wholly loyal part of Spain's ethnically diverse population if not for the suspiciousness, the petty captiousness and gradually increasing persecution, which, indeed, produced exactly what they were meant to prevent—leading to resistance and search of outside aid. The same would have ensued in response to such persecution from any group of old Christians. What was surprising was the ineffectiveness of the contacts the brutally persecuted Moriscos established with the external enemies of the Spanish Crown.

I have already referred to the nature of the Suprema and its activities from the mid-16th century on. Spain's "golden age" was, in fact, a "golden age" of persecutions. The country's ever deeper involvement in international conflicts, which were in form religious and ideological, added fuel to the fire: the attitude of the authorities to the Morisco problem became sterner still. Could a state be considered secure if the population in some locality, and what was worse a maritime locality, consisted almost entirely of Moriscos, the only old Christians in some of the villages being the priest, the notary public, and here and there the village innkeeper? The wish of the Moriscos to live together, to be among people speaking the same language, wearing the same clothes, and practising the same customs was, naturally, only augmented by the persecutions. The repressions harmed rather than encouraged the process of assimilation. That, in turn, redoubled the suspicions and fears of the authorities. The Moriscos were suspected of ties not only with the corsairs of the Barbary Coast, which was hardly surprising, especially when the latter began systematically raiding Spain's Me-

diterranean shore, but also with the French Huguenots (via Catalonia), which, of course, was contrary to logic, save for the fact that Muslims and Protestants were both enemies of His Catholic Majesty, the King of Spain. To be sure, the policy of repressions saw the most absurd suspicions being confirmed.

The Moriscos traded with the Huguenots in arms and other military equipment. But with the Barbary Coast corsairs things were more complicated. In the 1550s and 60s, the corsairs landed in Spain territory fairly frequently, sometimes marching ten or twelve kilometres inland. No few Moriscos left the country aboard their ships. In 1565, the Turks laid siege to Malta.

Meanwhile, Spanish counter-blows (such as the expedition against Tripoli) ended in failure. The Inquisition supplied "proof" at the time of the Moriscos having ties with the corsairs of Algeria and Tetuan, and the chiefs of Moroccan tribes, and of their sending intelligence to Constantinople, and of being poised to capture some of the port cities in order to turn them over to the Turkish navy. It was also maintained that Moriscos who had fled from Spain earlier were in Malta collecting intelligence about the Spanish naval squadron there. True, all these confessions had been made under duress in the dungeons of the Inquisition. But in the eyes of Philip II and his government that did not make them any the less trustworthy.

The Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges, issued back in 1526, forbade Muslim clothes, names, songs, dances, and even the Moorish baths, which were suspected of being some sort of political club. For a long time, however, this legislation was not, in fact, observed. But on January 1, 1567, on the seventieth anniversary of the conquest of Grenada, the last stronghold of the Moors on the Iberian Peninsula, the authorities declared that the Pragmatic Sanction would be abided by for two successive years. The persecution of Moriscos became unbearable. In their despair, they resorted to the only thing left to them—outright rebellion. It began at the end of 1567 and spread to

the large mountain areas between Sierra Nevada and the coast. The Moriscos were aware that 60,000 crack troops of the Spanish army were in the Netherlands, and trusted the Turkish sultan's promise of aid. They scored a series of victories. The papal nuncio at Philip's court reported in a secret dispatch dated October 26, 1569, that if the insurrection should last another winter, the Spanish state might collapse.

The inability of Philip II to put down the uprising for so long a time despite mustering considerable armed forces, quickly became a factor of European significance. William of Orange wrote: "It is an example for us, in that the Moors are able to resist for so long... We shall see what will happen if the Moriscos can hold out until the Turks can send them some aid."¹

In 1569, the bey of Algeria, a vassal of the Porte, sent the rebels arms and military equipment, and raided the Spanish coast. In January 1570, he captured Tunis, which was then a Spanish protectorate. The Turkish sultan himself promised to aid the Moriscos against the infidels, but his help came too late. It took the Spanish authorities two years to crush the rebel army of something like 45,000 armed men. Thereupon, 150,000 Moriscos were forcibly banished from Grenada in November 1570 and resettled in other parts of Spain. At least every fifth Morisco died on the way from hunger and privations. The province was ravaged as after an enemy invasion. But the Moriscos, who were now settled in all corners of the kingdom, turned from a local into a national problem. The authorities had second thoughts, and forbade Moriscos to settle in the maritime districts of Andalusia (from 1579) and Valencia (from 1586).

Charles Petrie, an Oxford historian, wrote some time ago: "It is doubtful whether the twentieth century would in similar circumstances have treated the Moriscos any better... In any event Philip was at last

¹ Geoffrey Parker, *Philip II*, Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1978, p. 106.

free to face the Turks without the fear of having a knife in his back."¹

This was exactly the standpoint of the Spanish authorities of that time. "We must count all moriscos avowed enemies," reported a government official in 1588. Following the defeat that year of the Spanish Armada, called invincible, by the English, the authorities began accusing Moriscos of ties with the English heretics, and feared another uprising of "new" Christians in the events of a possible landing of English seamen.

It remains for me to add that the Moriscos numbered no more than 80,000 by that time, that is, less than one per cent of Spain's population of nine million.²

The atmosphere created by the ambient conflict generated a bloody witchhunt all over Western Europe and exacted a heavy toll in lives. Small wonder that the chronology of these persecutions coincides with that of the ambient conflict of the age (approximately 1520 to 1650), with the reprisals being concentrated in areas where the contending camps fought their main battles.

The Profane Alliance

During the reign of Charles V, Spain inevitably became the chief antagonist of the Turkish Empire. It was one of the German emperor's sources of power. The Turks thrusting into the Balkans ran head-on into Charles V's troops. It was also the mainstay of the Christian states opposing the Ottoman Empire in the Mediterranean. The vassals of the Porte in Northern Africa, above all Algeria and Tripoli, existed on the plunder they practised of the Spanish possessions in Southern Italy and Sicily, on piracy against Spanish merchant ships. Meanwhile the per-

¹ Charles Petrie, *Don John of Austria*, Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1967, p. 110.

² John Lynch, *Spain under the Hapsburgs*, Vol. I, *Empire and Absolutism. 1516-1598*, New York University Press, New York, 1981, pp. 218-224.

secutions in Spain spurred by the conflict generated a new wave of emigration among Moriscos and Marranos above all to the possessions of the sultan. Some of these emigrants rose to positions of influence at the court of Suleiman the Magnificent in Constantinople, and went out of their way to stoke up anti-Spanish sentiment, though, to be sure, it was already at white heat owing to the prevailing situation and made an increasingly strong impact on the Turkish ruler's plans.

In substance, the Porte threatened specific countries, above all the possessions of the Hapsburgs rather than Western Europe as a whole. Hence, objectively, it was an ally of all the forces that opposed the Hapsburgs, and especially of the camp of the Reformation. In Luther's famous theses of 1517 (censured by the Pope in 1520) the 34th was specially devoted to the Turkish threat. It said that the proposal to fight against the Turks was tantamount to resisting the Lord's censure of worldly sins and vices. Luther defended this thesis in 1520 and 1521 in his retorts to the papal bull of excommunication. But in the mid-1520s Luther's pronouncements changed in tenor. And in October 1529, he said: "I fight until death against the Turks and the God of the Turks."

Why this about-turn in the attitude of the spiritual leader of the princely Reformation? Because the international situation had changed. In 1517, the menace of another Turkish campaign against Hungary and through that country against Germany, had still appeared remote. It had seemed that Turkish expansion was chiefly directed to the Mediterranean, where resistance was the concern of the papacy, the chief enemy of the nascent Protestantism. Fighting the Turks was the Pope's business, and, not surprisingly at all, such fighting appeared to Luther as contempt of the authority and the commands of the Lord. Doubly so, because Church tradition had it that Attila was "the scourge of God". (I might add that other theologians went further and portrayed Turkish expansion as the fulfilment of the prophecy of Daniel and other prophets of the Old Testament,

with Luther objecting against these interpretations of the Bible.)

In 1529, after the Hungarian army had been routed by the Ottoman armies at Mohacs, the Turks mounted an offensive against Austria. Now, the war against the Turks had to be conducted under the personal leadership of the emperor, who at that time was locked in battle with the throne of Rome. Despite this, however, Charles V failed to achieve, nor could he hope to achieve, reconciliation with the Protestant princes who had Luther for their ideologist. Luther's pronouncements reflected the fear that the controversy between the Protestant princes and the emperor would result in a gradual conquest of Germany by the Turkish armies, in Islam's victory over Christianity. But in the very pamphlets in which Luther called for unity against the advancing Turks, he never failed to add that the Pope and the doctrines of Rome had to be fought with the same energy as the sultan and the Mohammedan faith. Saying again in his works, including the very last, that the invasion of infidels was a sign of the Lord's anger, a punishment to sinful Europe, and that "therefore the Turk is our schoolmaster", Luther called on his countrymen not to despair, to earn pardon and salvation through defeatism and penitence.

Erasmus of Rotterdam did not agree with Luther's view of the Ottoman peril as the Lord's punishment of sinful Europe. He also believed, however, that the sultan's successes were due to the vices of Christian society, and that the latter's turning over a new leaf and changing for the better may win it respect and the friendship of the awesome enemy. US historian Stephen A. Fischer-Galati arrived at the following conclusion:

"The Protestants readily linked the problems presented to the Hapsburgs by direct and indirect Ottoman aggression with their struggle for survival, consolidation, and expansion in Germany... Almost all major concessions wrested from the Hapsburgs since 1526 were connected with Ottoman activities in Eastern and Western Europe, and the all-important Lutheran campaign for legal recognition in Germany

exploited the insoluble Hapsburg-Ottoman conflict over Hungary."¹ (The Calvinists among the Hungarian magnates turned for aid to the Turks against Vienna also in the latter half of the 17th century.)

The line of engagement (between Protestantism and the Counter-Reformation, and between the Christian states of Europe and the Ottoman Empire) of the two conflicts may be traced above all in the sphere of finance. For weren't the abuses practised by the papacy with money pumped out of various countries on the pretext of fitting out a new crusade against the Turks one of the chief causes of the Reformation beginning in Germany? The empire of Charles V became the chief unifying force in the struggle against the Turks and, at the same time, of the Catholic elements in Germany who tried to suppress the Reformation. To field an army strong enough to halt the Turks, Charles needed large cash subsidies. He could not count on receiving them from the Diet, where the influence of the Protestant princes was strong, unless he complied with at least some of their demands. As a result, the time of the greatest peril of a Turkish invasion became a time of the greatest concessions to Protestantism and, I might add, they were concessions that could not be later reneged upon. The Turkish invasion had thus helped Protestantism to irreversibly assert itself.

The Diet of Speier in 1526 discussed a resolution adopted five years before, which placed Luther outside the pale of the law as a heretic, and which was not carried into effect. The new Diet, too, preferred not to try and carry out that resolution, for countless Turkish regiments were advancing on Hungary and it would have been most injudicious to risk a grave internal conflict in Germany.

The same situation arose in 1529, when the Turks besieged Vienna. After Suleiman's armies withdrew, however, Charles V tried a tougher line against

¹ Stephen A. Fischer-Galati, *Ottoman Imperialism and German Protestantism. 1521-1555*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1959, pp. 116-117.

the Protestants. The latter responded by forming the League of Schmalkalden. Its chief organiser, Philip of Hesse, counted on a possible new Turkish offensive. Charles V, too, could not ignore that possibility. In July 1531, he admitted that he would evidently have to come to terms with the Lutherans on this account. So, for a number of years there was the most direct relationship between Charles's struggle against the Turks and his struggle against the League of Schmalkalden, with an aggravation of one causing a lessening of the other.

The relationship between the two conflicts was also in evidence in countries other than Germany. As king of Spain, the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire was the chief force opposing the Turks in the Mediterranean, and that struggle called for great strain and expenditure. In substance, it ruled out any extensive use of the resources which Charles marshalled from Spain and his Italian possessions against the Protestant party in Germany. It should be added, that in European countries conquered by the Porte, the latter encouraged rather than combated the existence and development of Protestantism among the Christian population. In the absence of the Turkish invasion, the Catholic Counter-Reformation would have gone out of its way to eradicate all traces of "heresy" there as well.

In short, in the first three decades of Protestantism, a most decisive period, it was able to win time, organise its forces, and consolidate its ranks largely by virtue of the "Turkish menace". In other words, the vain attempts to settle the old conflict, within one and the same social system, with resort to arms clearly showed that the new, more fundamental conflict between different social systems could not be solved by force. The aims of one conflict continued to come into collision with the aims of the other. The Jesuits, who had installed themselves in Constantinople, did not engage in missionary sermons addressed to the unfaithful. They were occupied with denouncing Protestant and Orthodox Greeks to the sultan's authorities, practising this for decade after decade until at least the mid-17th century.

The Letter of Francis I

The power of the Ottoman onslaught was not due only to the indirect support it received from the Protestant principalities. It depended much on the fact that the Turks had found an ally in France, that powerful Catholic state.

In 1525, the troops of Charles V crushed the French army headed by King Francis I himself in the battle at Pavia. Francis was captured and brought to Madrid. He bought his release through humiliating concessions which, however, he immediately reneged upon regaining freedom. While Francis was still prisoner of the Spanish, Queen-Mother Louise of Savoy, who had proclaimed herself regent, tried to establish contact with the sultan. Her first messengers were intercepted and killed by agents of the Hapsburgs. But one of the French agents, a certain Count of Frangipani, managed to reach Constantinople in December 1525. He conveyed the French regent's request to attack possessions of the emperor and prevent him from becoming the ruler of all Europe. In the opinion of one of her latest biographers, the queen-mother's message is reason enough to consider her the first to initiate the conception of the "balance of power".¹ (In fact, as we will see, this conception and its practical use dates to an earlier period.)

Rumour has it that Frangipani also delivered to the sultan a personal letter from Francis, which the captive king had secretly sent from Madrid to Paris hidden in the sole of his courier's boot. The sultan, who was just then planning his campaign against Hungary, seized upon this opportunity to acquire an ally. He sent a reply to Francis, advising him to be of good cheer despite his ordeal. Through Frangipani he orally promised him aid against Charles V.

The emperor got word of what he described as "the sacrilegious union of the Lily [the heraldic de-

¹ Dorothy Moulton Mayer, *The Great Regent. Louise of Savoy. 1476-1531*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1966, p. 200.

vice of the house of Valois—*Y. Ch.*] and the Crescent".¹ Contemporaries recalled that when Charles V berated Francis for joining hands with an infidel "dog", the sultan, the French king replied: "I use the aid of a dog; but it is to protect my flock against the teeth of a wolf."²

Some modern-day historians assume that Francis I had urged on the sultan in 1525 to attack Hungary. They accuse Venice and the Pope himself of the same thing. They even say he had sent troops to aid the Turkish army.

In 1533, Francis I met Pope Clement VIII. His contemporaries accused the latter of blessing the French king's alliance with the sultan, and also with the German Protestants. This is unconfirmed by documents. It is a fact, however, that Clement betrayed the content of his secret negotiations with the French king to Charles V. According to the Pope, Francis I had said in so many words that, far from resisting any Turkish invasion of Christian lands, he would, on the contrary, as best he could, help the sultan in order to ease recovery of what belonged to him, the king of France, and his children, and had been usurped by the emperor.

The Franco-Turkish alliance was prompted by the disposition of forces, though neither side could publicly admit it. It was hardly fitting for His Christian Majesty, the King of France, known as Champion of the Faith, any more than for the ruler of the faithful, Sultan Suleiman. Even the informal, initially secret, understanding between Paris and Constantinople was received in Europe with outrage. But in the 1530s the links between Paris and the Porte became public knowledge. French merchants received commercial privileges in Turkey (by virtue of the so-called Capitulations of 1535).³

On the pretext of retaining France on the Catho-

¹ Harold Lamb, *Suleiman, the Magnificent Sultan of the East*, Bantam Books, New York, 1954, pp. 94-96.

² Estienne Pasquier, *Lettres historiques pour les années 1556-1594*, Librairie Droz, Geneva, 1966, p. 253.

³ The latest studies place in doubt the commercial importance of the Capitulations of 1535, and even the fact that they

lic side in the main ambient conflict, the Hapsburgs also wanted to involve it in the other conflict, that between Christianity and Islam. Under the secret treaty of Joinville, which Spain concluded with the French Catholic League, an extremist Catholic group, in December 1584, the latter pledged to dissolve the alliance which had by then linked France and the Ottoman Empire for all of half a century. The French Huguenots, too, tried to use the "Turkish card" on several occasions. Their chief, Admiral Coligny, established contacts with Suleiman the Magnificent, which were broken off by the sultan's death in 1566. After the admiral was killed in the Massacre of St Bartholomew's Day, contacts with Sultan Murad III were established by Henry of Navarre (later Henry IV), who received promises of aid in his struggle against King Philip II of Spain. (More of this later.)

The rebellious Netherlands took the same road. In 1569, William of Orange sent a secret messenger to Constantinople. Attempts to establish direct contacts with the Porte were also made later. One episode in the long struggle that the Dutch waged against the armies of Philip II was symbolic: some of the relieving force that saved Leyden from the Spaniards wore caps with crescents inscribed "Rather Turks than Papists".¹

The interests of Venice, another important participant in the conflict, its lack of strength (especially of ground troops) to repulse the Turkish pressure, compelled it to try and form a broad and strong coalition in a bid to turn the war against the sultan into a conflict between Christianity and Islam. At the same time, since the Venetians depended so much on the trade routes to the East, which were under Turk-

had existed. If we take this to be true, we can assume that the first Capitulations were granted to French merchants by Sultan Selim II in 1569 (Gaston Zeller, "Une légende qui à la vie dure: les capitulations de 1535", in *Revue d'Histoire moderne et contemporaine*, Vol. 2, April-June 1955, pp. 127-132).

¹ Dorothy M. Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk. A Pattern of Alliances 1350-1700*, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 1954, pp. 144-145.

ish control, since they depended on grain shipments from Asia Minor, the Balkans and the south of Russia, impossible without the sultan's consent, and in view of the vulnerability of the possessions of Venice in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Republic of Saint Mark (as Venice was then called) was most susceptible to Turkish threats and prepared for considerable concessions to end the war. In 1540, Venice withdrew from the anti-Turkish coalition, which also included the emperor and the Pope, and sued the Porte for peace. The reason was the obvious disparity of war aims: for Charles V they were confined to squaring accounts with Algeria, while Venice was concerned with its possessions in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Venice played a special part in the secret war that accompanied the ambient conflict. The information that each side had about the other was most incomplete and, more important still, exceedingly outdated. That is why all data obtained directly from Constantinople was well paid for. Venice was a source of such data for it had an efficient intelligence service. Another source was certain quarters in the port of Ragusa (now Dubrovnik), who, among others, regularly supplied news to the Vatican. The Turks, for their part, sought to exploit the knowledge of Venetian diplomats and secret agents. At times of peace with Turkey, the Republic of Saint Mark had a stake in not incurring the sultan's displeasure. For that reason, the Venetian ambassador in Constantinople acquiesced when he was politely asked on behalf of the grand vizier to write home and obtain full details of Emperor Charles V's naval preparations. It was politely added, that the task was easy, because the Venetian observers knew "what the fish were doing in the depths of the sea".

To be sure, there were failures, too, in the Venetian intelligence. In 1540, the Venetian ambassador's instructions at peace talks with the Turks were sold to the French, and the latter passed them on to their Turkish allies. The consequences were most painful for Venice, and the terms of the treaty it signed with the sultan far worse than expected.

Elizabethan England stood aloof from the

struggle with Islam. This was in the interests of British trade. In due course, English diplomacy began to use its ties with the Porte more and more actively in various diplomatic combinations.

Throughout the 16th century schemes were drawn up to stop one of the ambient conflicts by uniting both camps to take part in the other. In 1584, Calvinist François de La Noue, imprisoned by Philip II, drew up the plan of another crusade. The same idea was elaborated upon by Father Joseph, a Capuchin friar who later became chief of Cardinal Richelieu's secret service. All these plans, however, were not put into effect.

The Hapsburgs scored their biggest successes during pauses in one of the ambient conflicts. A vivid example is the victory of the united fleet of Spain, Venice and the Pope over the Turkish navy at Lepanto on October 7, 1571. This was the time when the Duke of Alva seemed to have managed to completely subdue the Netherlands, and when England, the other possible adversary, was recovering from a recent (1569) Catholic revolt in its northern counties and Elizabeth I feared new plots against her. One of these plots was that of Roberto di Ridolfi. To be sure, it may partly have also been a governmental provocation.

The policy of temporarily blunting one of the conflicts in order to concentrate forces on the other, became a clearly deliberate aim of Spanish diplomacy in the late 1570s. In the 80s, Spain won a number of repeatedly renewed armistices with the Turks, and was thus able to concentrate its forces against England and the Netherlands, while accusing them of wanting to gain the support of the "enemy of Christendom".

The former single-mindedness in assessing the gravity of the Turkish peril evaporated in the early 17th century. Doubts as to the menace that the Porte held out for Western Christianity were voiced more frequently. In 1607, on returning home, an English ambassador said Turkey was in decline and it would not be hard for the West European countries to defeat it. His successor, Thomas Roe, who observed the

chaos during one more interregnum highlighted by a janizary mutiny in Constantinople, wrote in 1622 that the Ottoman empire was "irrecoverably sick".¹ Roe, thus, anticipated the Russian Tsar Nikolai I's well-known observation made 230 years later about Turkey being the "sick man of Europe".

As the Porte grew weaker, the Spanish and Austrian Hapsburgs tried time and again to use the disaffection of the Christian peoples in the Balkans enslaved by the Turks, and even tried to influence the scramble for the throne that erupted after the death of almost every sultan. In 1609 and later the Spanish authorities discussed using a certain Jachia ibn Mehmed, who claimed to be a son of Mehmed III, born in October 1585 and sent to Greece by his mother who feared he would be killed after the sultan's death by the successor to the throne. (Mehmed III had killed 18, and by other estimates as many as 21, of his brothers after his enthronement). In the next 20 years, governments of other European countries, too, speculated about capitalising on the claims of this Turkish imposter.

What attracted attention was the backwardness of the Turkish navy, which still consisted of galleys, while the navies of Europe had begun building considerably larger and swifter sailing ships. Much was being said of the decline of the Porte by advocates of a new crusade of whom there were many even after the outbreak of the Thirty Years War which had made such a project quite obviously impossible. The rumours of Turkey's decline were premature, and the plans of a military solution of the conflict with all Islam—even with the Ottoman Empire alone—were still as chimerical as a hundred years before during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent.

The decline of the Porte did not become apparent until after the last, 1683 Turkish campaign in Western Europe, which ended in defeat at Vienna. Poland's King John Sobieski entered the Austrian capital, af-

¹ Michael F. Brown, *Itinerant Ambassador. The Life of Sir Thomas Roe*, The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, 1970, p. 126.

ter relieving the siege. Emperor Leopold I soon returned there, too, and publicly asked whether he, a monarch by the right of succession, should grant an audience to an elected king, for Sobieski, who had defeated the Turks, was just such a king. Discussion of this issue, which vividly showed the Hapsburgs' idea of gratitude, took all of five days, giving the Turks a chance to quietly withdraw from Austria.

After 1683, a period of almost continuous setbacks and retreats began for the Turks. At the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century the wars of the Hapsburgs against the Ottoman Empire were in many ways lacking the tokens of an ambient conflict. Religion ceased to play its part in them. Officers of the imperial troops were recruited irrespective of being Catholic or Protestant, and the commander-in-chief, Prince Eugene of Savoy, was by the criteria of that time, obviously indifferent to religion, if not a free thinker. At that stage, too, the ambient conflict was not being resolved by war. Simply, it gradually stopped being itself, turning into the pernicious Eastern question—a question about the fate of what were predominantly European territories still ruled by the Porte, and also the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus.

The Shadow of El Escorial Over Europe

At the end of the 1550s, Emperor Charles V, King Henry II of France, Queen Mary Tudor of England, Ignatius Loyola, John Calvin, Pope Paul IV and other historical figures embodying the ambient conflict during its first few decades, went off the scene one by one. A short break ensued in the struggle, followed by a peace between Spain and France. The south of Europe, that is, Spain and Italy, were not affected by the Reformation which had triumphed in the north of the continent—part of Germany, Scandinavia, the west of Poland, and Bohemia. A long-drawn-out struggle between Protestantism and the Counter-Reformation lay ahead in England, France, and the Netherlands. The leading protagonists of the new phase of

the struggle appeared on the stage—Philip II of Spain, Elizabeth I of England, Catherine de Médicis, William of Orange, and the popes of the Counter-Reformation who succeeded those of the Renaissance.

Calvinist John Knox, the zealous Scottish preacher, published his treatise, *First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, in which he denounced the Catholic princesses and queens and prophesied the calamities that would ensue if they came to power. He was referring first of all to Catherine de Médicis and Mary Stuart, who, indeed, were to play a prominent though disparate role in the ambient conflict.

By the time it became obvious that an armed victory over Protestantism in Germany was a vain dream, both camps had already worked out the ideological platforms that served them in the succeeding hundred years of armed confrontation. The foundations of Protestantism were laid in the works of the Reformation's first-generation ideologues, above all Martin Luther, and the ideologue of the second generation John Calvin. Nothing of substance was added in the times that followed. Nor did any new names appear that could in some way rival in influence those of the founders of the various Protestant currents. In the camp of their opponents the resolutions of the Council of Trent formally confirmed the slightly updated dogmas of Catholicism, and also backed up the centralisation and efficiency of the Church structure.

The closing of the Council of Trent in 1564 and the death of Calvin the year before may be considered the time of the finalisation of the ideologies of the belligerent camps. By that time, both camps already had their shock detachments—the Calvinists in the Protestant camp and the Jesuits in the camp of the Counter-Reformation.

The ambient conflict affected all strata of society—from royalty and the social elite down to the common people who, indeed, bore its main burdens. It also affected all the forms of social ideology—theology, philosophy, science, literature and all the other arts. True, its contemporaries were only vaguely aware of the social and economic causes of the conflict

and were quite incapable of anticipating its consequences. Nearly all the peace treaties concluded in the period were, in substance, nothing but ceasefires. The belligerents came to terms not on stopping the confrontation but on temporary breathing spaces. The agreements were meant to record conditions that would, some time later, create pretexts for resuming armed struggle.

Still, governments concluded peace treaties, though the international detachments of the Counter-Reformation, above all the Jesuits, continued to operate zealously. The conflict developed along a spiral rather than a straight ascendant line. During its first decades it was inhibited by the armed confrontation between the empire of Charles V and the French kingdom, the two mightiest Catholic powers. This did not end until 1559. Until then, the attempts to resolve the conflict by armed force were confined to within the borders of the German empire. In the latter half of the century, however, these attempts spread to nearly all the rest of Europe.

The middle of the century, thus, had been a turning point. From the 1560s on, the ambient conflict had its focus in the struggle for the Netherlands which had risen against Philip II, in the civil wars that were ravaging France, and in the struggle for England and Scotland. Cumulatively, this was to determine the future of Europe. All the European states were either directly involved in or made party to the struggle through the chain reaction that it started in the system of international relations.

Meanwhile, as we read in Charles de Coster's *The Glorious Adventures of Tyl Ulenspiegl*, King Philip was "continually cold, wine did not warm him up, neither did the fire of scented wood that burned in the room where he was. There, always writing, seated amidst as many letters as would have filled a hundred casks, he dreamed of the universal domination of the world, such as the Roman Emperors exercised."

Tradition has it that Philip II, who made Madrid the capital of Spain (in 1561), had withdrawn to a sombre though elaborate castle and abbey, El Escorial. The Spanish considered the castle the eighth

wonder of the world. It was built and adorned by the finest architects and artists of Spain, Italy, and Flanders. The cubic immensity of rock and stone seen from afar against the dark background of the Sierra de Guadarrama, was reminiscent either of a giant barracks or a hospital. To be sure, the story of Philip being a recluse was greatly exaggerated. Some historians tend to describe it as a legend, for the king occasionally toured the Spanish provinces and, indeed, did not spend all the seasons of the year in El Escorial.

But the legend did reflect the essence of Philip II's policy. The king was gradually turning his back on the realities of the world, seeming to fence himself off from them behind the tall walls of the abbey. His political thinking reckoned less and less with the facts if they went against his preconceived notions. While Charles V, who was both king of Spain and royal head of the Holy Roman Empire, blandly associated the plans of the reactionary camp with the concept of a universal monarchy, Philip II was compelled to give precedence to his role as leader and standard-bearer of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. In 1564, he wrote to Pope Pius IV: "Rather than suffer the slightest thing to prejudice the true religion and service of God I would lose all my States, I would lose my life a hundred times over if I could, for I am not and will not be a ruler of heretics."¹

The Franco-Spanish Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis of 1559 resulted, in effect, in the establishment of Spanish hegemony in Italy, which Philip II obtained in return for recognising the French acquisitions east of Boulogne (Metz, Verdun, Tulle), and also Calais, won back after two centuries of English rule, the year before.

Some Western historians say that to ascribe to Philip II the intention of Catholicising the world is to put a simplistic construction on the actual state of affairs, because each of Spain's conquests was due to diverse reasons and concrete circumstances.²

¹ Jack Beeching, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

² See Charles Howard Carter, *The Secret Diplomacy of the Habsburgs, 1598-1625*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1964, pp. 39-43.

"After 1559," writes an American historian, "Spain occupied the role of European arbiter, and as long as Spanish policy was motivated by a dogged determination to maintain the status quo (which meant a continuation of the Spanish hegemony), Philip II's interests were best served by conservatism and universal peace"¹.

But that is just the point: to maintain and consolidate Spanish supremacy was inconceivable without suppressing or at least trying to suppress the multiplying internal and external, overt and covert, potential enemies.

Scholars found nothing resembling the plan of a universal monarchy which had obsessed Charles V, in the countless papers of Philip II. Prominent US historian H. G. Koenigsberger considered this ample proof that the king had no such aims, that subjectively he merely wished to protect his possessions from outside enemies and to crush heresy inside the country. "There remained, however," Koenigsberger wrote, "the vital question of what he meant by them and how he was going to act on them in practice".² It turned out that to attain his aims, Philip II not only had to suppress the insurrection in the Netherlands and crush the power of the Porte, but also gain some form of control over France and England, and suppress the resistance of the Protestant princes to the hegemony of the Hapsburgs in Europe.

The ambient conflict created additional ideological, political, diplomatic and military opportunities for Spain, the main power in the reactionary camp, to conduct wars of conquest. It also proliferated the reasons and motivations for resorting to arms, against individual states involved in the conflict in order to prevent its possible intensification and to capture favourable strategic positions for continuing the armed conflict in future against the antagonist's main forces.

Many "private" wars were waged in preparation for

¹ De Lamar Jensen, *Diplomacy and Dogmatism. Bernardino de Mendoza and the French Catholic League*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1964, p. 5.

² H. G. Koenigsberger, "The Stagecraft of Philip II", in *European Studies Review*, January 1971, pp. 1-21.

resuming the war on an all-European scale.

The ambient conflict not only spurred the forming of politico-military blocs, and not only cemented them, but also helped the leading power of the conservative camp to compel its other members to reconcile themselves to the role of junior partner, to unequal status, and subordination of their foreign policy to its interests. They were forced to agree to greater expenditures than seemed right to them, to place their armed forces under a foreign command, to participate in armed campaigns that were not directly related to their state interests, to carry out measures at home desired by the hegemon, and, lastly, in some cases, to remain within the bloc contrary to their own advantage.

These days, Catholic authors object to the "denigration" of Philip II by liberal 19th-century historians. They stress that the king was moved by a lofty sense of duty, and ennobled by religion and a striving to assert law and order. They overlook the fact that the monarch's "sense of duty" reposed on a conviction that royalty could secretly carry out unlawful and perfidious actions, being accountable for them solely to God (or, more precisely, to the court confessors, who always willingly vindicated Philip's every deed).

Philip II was the embodiment, if not a sinister caricature, of what later generations regard as bureaucratic rule. He sat at his desk from morning till night, trying to rule the world from his study, leafing through a multitude of papers, including some that were of no import at all, writing long remarks and admonitions on the margins, and, even, pedantically correcting spelling mistakes. Here, at his desk, he wove an endless web of administrative instructions, military orders, and political intrigues that encompassed all the then known countries of the Old and New Worlds. Personal matters rarely distracted the king from the absorbing ocean of papers. True, he was married four times, but each marriage was motivated exclusively by dynastic or diplomatic considerations. All his life was dedicated to the bureaucratic virtues which, as he conceived them, blended with religious duty.

In January 1568, the king and an armed guard

came to the chambers of his son and heir, Don Carlos. The Infante, wakened from his sleep, fearfully asked whether his father had come to kill him. With his usual frigid calm, the king had his son's papers taken from him, and put him under arrest. This was the last time father and son met. The Infante was kept in the prison of El Alcazar castle. While Philip II was discussing Don Carlos's fate with his closest advisers, word of the Infante's death arrived on July 25. The circumstances in which he died are unknown. Most probably, Philip considered him, his successor, who was of unsound mind, unfit to occupy the throne. Explanations along these lines, which the king gave of his behaviour in letters to foreign royalty, were true to the facts. Yet rumours spread at once that the Infante had been executed either for his love affair with Elizabeth of Valois, his stepmother, or even for participation in a "Protestant conspiracy". Even earlier, there had been rumours of Don Carlos planning to flee to the Netherlands (and, for that matter, to Italy).

It appears, indeed, that Don Carlos made no secret of his intentions, which was enough to make them look like the vagaries of a not entirely normal person rather than considered actions of a conspirator. Subsequently it was these rumours about the Infante's conspiracy that gave rise to a legend which inspired Schiller's brilliant tragedy immortalising Don Carlos.

In Emile Verhaeren's drama, *Philippe II* (1901), which describes Don Carlos's plans of escape, the Infante exclaims, addressing his merciless father:

*Oh, nocturnal king and false who spies on us,
Oh, sombre king and violent ...
Oh, silent king and furious, king of horror ...*

Philip elevated mistrust to a principle of his rule. Even the Duke of Alva and Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma, whose loyalty had stood the test many a time in most complicated circumstances, became objects of suspicion. All too often, this mistrust had a harmful effect on the conduct of affairs. While reluctant to dismiss or replace a governor or general, Phil-

ip did not hesitate to deny him requisite resources and powers to successfully fulfil his mission. In effect, he thereby strengthened royal power, and prevented the Crown from becoming a pawn of aristocratic cliques. But this did not help secure his aims in his numerous wars and other external undertakings.

“Doubtless the essential feature of the empire of Philip II,” wrote Fernand Braudel, a noted French historian, “was its Hispanic, one could even say Castilian, character.”¹ In this sense, it contrasted strongly from that of his father, Charles V. Already in 1546, Protestant pamphlets appearing in Germany spurned the emperor, who was born in the Netherlands, and his possible successor Philip: “No Walloon should rule us,” they read, “and besides no Spaniard.”²

In the circumstances, the conservative camp had no choice but to appeal to national prejudices and hostility. At times of the maximum tension in the ambient conflict, it could not continue without a more or less extensive involvement of the mass of the people. The leaders of the conservative camp with their aggressive plans, however, could promise nothing aside from plunder to the masses for participating in the conflict. For this reason, the wheels of ideological coercion turned more and more rapidly; capitalising on backwardness and superstitions rewards in heaven were promised; hatred of strangers was fanned; and social demagogery was practised, especially where participation in the conflict had led to civil war. The ideology of the Counter-Reformation emphasised the primacy of the interests of the faith over the interests of the state, originating not from analysis of the realities but from religious dogmas and the universal legal standards reposing on them.

A system of nation-states was gradually shaping in Europe. Most of these, consciously or not, gravitated towards a balance of power (known already in Antiquity and asserted once again during the Renaissance) to consolidate their positions. In the meantime, the ambient conflict reflected ever more distinctly the

¹ Fernand Braudel, *op. cit.*, p. 523.
² *Ibid.*, p. 733.

leading Catholic power's plans of a universal monarchy. The very course of that conflict gave impulse to a tendency towards bipolarity, though there was no leading state within the Protestant camp to serve as a nucleus. At the same time, withdrawal from the ambient conflict was made possible precisely by the relative balance of power between the two camps, with the military bipolarity leading up to political multipolarity.

The "interests" of the ambient conflict were liable to diverge from those of the countries which, contrary to their objective interests, had been drawn into it. Participation in the conflict against Protestantism on the side of Spain and the German emperor, for example, went counter to the national interests of France. This was obvious. Hence, while remaining Catholic, France in effect opposed the main force of the Catholic Counter-Reformation both in the early half of the 16th century (during the reigns of Francis I and Henry II) and in the early half of the 17th century. The only exception were the last 30-odd years of the 16th century, the time of the long-drawn-out religious wars when the Catholic party in France considered participation in the ambient conflict a means of winning inside the country.

The interests of the conservative camp and those of any of the countries in that camp were never completely identical, even if we take the state interests to have been what the governments of those countries conceived them to be. Furthermore, the conception of these interests was not entirely identical even within the circle of those who ruled. Philip II, for example, identified the interests of Spain with the dynastic interests of the Spanish branch of the Hapsburgs, while some of his intimates doubted the advantages the state derived from participating in the ambient conflict and were conscious, if only partially, of the ravages that such participation brought down upon the country. Precisely owing to such sentiments, even Philip II had had to hide the interests of the dynasty and of the ambient conflict behind a show of concern for the interests of the state, of Spain, in the generic sense of the word. But to portray the chime-

rical aim of destroying the opponent in the ambient conflict as the main advantage for the country meant, simply, to deny content to the very notion of state interests. Yet the king was accustomed to identifying the interests of the Hapsburg powers, above all those of Spain, which sought European hegemony, with the interests of Catholicism. But even he would not go to extremes, would not risk considerable military resources, unless the great-power interests of Spain were really at stake.

The same duality may be seen in the case of the Vatican. The papacy acted as the inspirer of the Counter-Reformation. Pius V, when sending off a detachment to help the French Catholics, ordered its commander, Count of Santafoire, "to take no Huguenot prisoner, but instantly to kill everyone that should fall into his hands".¹

The Pope advised Philip II to suppress the Dutch uprising by force of arms. Alva's sanguinary measures were so acceptable to him that he sent the duke a consecrated hat and sword as marks of his approval.² At the height of the reign of terror in the Netherlands the papal nuncio declared himself "perfectly satisfied" with the proceedings of the Spanish king.³ In the 1570s and 80s, Pope Gregory XIII made no secret of his desire to bring about a general combination against heretic England, and had this subject pressed on Philip II and the house of Guise.⁴ In 1590, Pope Gregory XIV excommunicated prelates, nobles and men of the third estate who persisted in their heresy.⁵ It even happened that considerable difficulties arose for Spanish diplomacy, which exploited the "spirit of the Counter-Reformation" but pursued its own aims, owing to the directness and the blind hatred of heretics, prevailing in the Vatican whenever policy was

¹ Leopold Ranke, *The History of the Popes, Their Church and State, and Especially of Their Conflicts with Protestantism in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Vol. 1, Henry G. Bohn, London, 1847, pp. 285-286.

² *Ibid.*, p. 286.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 436.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

⁵ Philippe Erlanger, *La reine Margot ou la rébellion*, Librairie académique Perrin, Paris, 1972, p. 311.

made there by thick-headed fanatics like Pius V. That sinister pontiff, a 73-year-old ascetic, Dominican friar, Inquisitor, and professor of theology, was known for his all-consuming hatred of heretics and heretical writings. The Spanish ambassador reported to Madrid that "the Church had not had a better head for 300 years". Upon his enthronement, Pius sent the treasurer of the holy throne, to whose fingers some of the papal treasure had stuck, to the galleys for life. He squared accounts with a number of top prelates, and launched in Rome a reign of terror against all those who were suspected of the least intention of departing from the true faith.

He declared struggle against Muslims and Protestants the task of the day, and discovered signs of heresy among the prostitutes of Rome. He asserted that some of them were Calvinists. Many of the harlots, who plied their trade literally beside the papal palace, were given the choice between banishment and taking the veil. But the world's oldest profession found influential protectors. A deputation of 40 leading townsmen explained to the pontiff that his order may harm Roman commerce and, consequently, the apostolic finances. Among the champions were the ambassadors of Spain, Portugal and Florence. The Pope was compelled to relent in face of this unexpected resistance.

As Pius V saw it, his measures would improve the morals of the clergy and townsmen of Rome. He never tired of protecting his flock against all temptations, even such as lay music and poetry, and even objected to the seductions of antique statues, some of which he ordered to be sent as gifts to friendly monarchs.

In 1570, Pius V excommunicated Queen Elizabeth I of England. This, in the opinion of Philip II, was a most improper thing to do. He himself had in the first almost ten years of the queen's reign thwarted all plans aimed at her forcible overthrow in the name of the Counter-Reformation. In 1561 he secured Rome's consent not to excommunicate Elizabeth for refusing to receive the nuncio, ambassador of the Roman throne. Two years later, in 1563, Philip saw to it that

the discussion of Elizabeth's excommunication at the Council of Trent should also come to nothing. Even in 1570, when Pope Pius V finally excommunicated Elizabeth, the King of Spain protested, and wrote to the queen that nothing the Pope had ever done evoked his displeasure more than her excommunication. The reason was obvious: should the Catholic Counter-Reformation triumph in England, it would put Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, whom Elizabeth kept under arrest on the throne. And Mary Stuart was a relative of the Guises, who were not yet associated with Madrid at the time, and of the French royal house of Valois. It seemed then, that France rather than Spain would gain if the Counter-Reformation won in England. Throughout the 1570s, Philip II had therefore firmly rejected the many proposals of Pope Gregory XIII to try and get England back into the Catholic fold by force. And this despite English pirates playing fast and loose with Spain's communications with its overseas colonies, and despite Elizabeth helping the Netherlands.

At the same time, the Spanish plans of turning the Counter-Reformation into an instrument for setting up a universal monarchy encountered ever stronger overt and covert resistance from the Roman throne. The reign of Philip II opened with Pope Paul IV declaring war on him and ended when Clement VIII began aiding the king's enemies in France. Gregory XIII tried to prevent Philip II's seizure of Portugal. Sixtus V refused to be involved in the plan of invading England in 1588. Earlier, in 1581, the king wrote his trusted adviser and minister, Cardinal de Granvelle: "It is clear to me that if the Netherlands were ruled by someone else, the Pope would have performed miracles to prevent them being lost to the Church, but because they are *my* states, I believe he is prepared to see them lost, because they will thus be lost to me."¹

Madrid, for its part, resisted any extension of Rome's power over the Spanish church. "There is

¹ Geoffrey Parker, *Philip II*, p. 158.

no pope in Spain," said Cristóbal Suárez de Figueroa, President of the Council of Castile.¹

Act Two

Philip II held that after the Battle of Lepanto his hands were free to suppress the insurrection in the Netherlands which, in essence, was a bourgeois revolution, and free, too, to help Mary Stuart seize the English throne and to give aid and succour to the militant Catholics in France. All this he conceived as steps towards the final victory of the Counter-Reformation.

Alva wrote that in the Netherlands he had no intention of rooting out the vineyard, but merely of cleansing it. The "cleansing", however, was brutal and bloody. From 1567 to 1573, the Council of Troubles, also known as the Blood Council, condemned 12,302 persons, out of whom 1,105 were executed or banished from the country. No one, including persons of high office and influence, felt safe.

The outcome of the struggle seemed predetermined due to the colossal disparity in finance and manpower. In 1574, only about twenty towns with a combined population of 75,000 remained faithful to William of Orange; Amsterdam, the largest city in Holland, stayed loyal to the Spanish king until 1578.² Later, too, whatever Holland's commercial successes may have been, it remained a small country in area and population. Dutch historian and man of letters Cornelis Pieterszoon Hooft wrote in 1617, recalling the past decades of struggle: "In comparison with the king of Spain we were like a mouse against an elephant."³

The country ruled by Philip II was, indeed, the richest in Europe at that time. The king had incomes at his disposal that were far greater than those of even the French and English crowns. In the long-drawn-out wars, Spain had evolved a centralised system of train-

¹ H. G. Koenigsberger, *The Habsburgs and Europe...*, p. 105.

² Geoffrey Parker, *Spain and the Netherlands*, p. 45.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

ing, controlling and supplying large masses of troops that no other West European country could rival, this giving the Spanish army the reputation of being the best in Europe. In tonnage and armaments, the Spanish navy, too, had no equal. Besides, we will do well to remember that Spain could use the economic resources of most of the Netherlands, that is the material wealth of a bourgeois type of economy, to make war on the rebels in that country.

Yet this assessment of strength turned out to be incorrect, for it failed to take into account what was more important and decisive: the economic potential of the rebel provinces, which was increasingly effective as time went on, and therefore expressed the invincibility of the new social system. This, indeed, gave substance to other factors, above all the changing international situation that formed the background for the struggle.

English historian Michael Roberts has advanced the idea of a "military revolution" in the hundred years of 1560-1660¹ which saw changes in tactics and strategy, called for the appearance of standing armies, for increases in the scale of military operations and in numerical strength, intensified the impact of war on life in the country, and so on. Many of these changes were noted a hundred years before Roberts by Frederick Engels. The book of Michael Roberts precipitated a controversy. His opponents noted, and not without cause, that some of the changes had begun some decades before 1560.² It is beyond question, indeed, that the chief and basic of the innovations occurred within the century and a half of the ambient conflict. And in the latter half of the 16th century the cost of war rose many times over.

French historian Pierre Chaunu sought to explain the zigzags in Madrid's policy vis-à-vis the Netherlands—its ups and downs, and the alternation of attempts to reach agreement with tough stances of no compromise—by the dynamics of the incoming profits from the trade through the port of Seville with the

¹ Michael Roberts, *The Military Revolution. 1560-1660*, Marjory Boyd, Belfast, 1956.

² Geoffrey Parker, *Spain and the Netherlands*, p. 88.

Spanish colonies in the New World. But further studies by certain French and English historians showed that the financial allocations for the war did not coincide with the above dynamics: the biggest military outlays (e.g., in 1580-1585, when the Spaniards reconquered the Southern Netherlands, what is now Belgium) frequently occurred at times when incomes from the trade with America shrank considerably. The main financial burden of the war was borne by the people of Spain itself, above all those of Castile, which by 1591 already was in dire economic straits. From the early half of the 1570s, Philip II borrowed enormous sums for ever higher interest, until the bankers finally realised that his government would not be able to repay them and refused new credits. By that time, the Spanish treasury owed 36 million ducats, a sum equalling the state's revenue of six or seven years.

On September 1, 1575, after two years' vacillation, Philip II announced he would repay none of his debts and would not let his creditors have the revenue from a number of taxes in payment for them. This financial relief, however, cost him dearly: he could no longer obtain funds in exchange for future royal incomes and, moreover, had no credit mechanism at his disposal to transfer available monies from his various possessions to the Netherlands for the maintenance of the Spanish army.

As General Luis de Requesens, the governor-general of the Netherlands, observed on October 30, 1575, two months after the announced bankruptcy, "even if the king found himself with ten millions in gold and wanted to send them all here, he has no way of doing so with this Bankruptcy ... because if the money were sent by sea in specie it would be lost, and it is impossible to send it by letters of exchange as hitherto because there is no merchant there (in Spain) who can issue them nor anyone who can accept and pay them."¹

By November 1576, getting no wages, the Spanish army, which numbered 60,000 on paper, had shrunk in fact to a mere 8,000. Mutinies erupted in its ranks.

¹ Geoffrey Parker, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

Spain was compelled to concede all the rebels' demands. And, moreover, Philip II had had to sound out the possibilities for an agreement with the sultan.¹

The international situation in which the Dutch revolution had begun was, by and large, unfavourable for it. The Dutch fight for independence, which was in essence a form of bourgeois revolution, dragged out for as long as 80-odd years—from 1566 to 1648. This was due to a set of factors, and above all to the fact that the struggle was against the most powerful feudal power of that time, one which, moreover, could exploit the economic potential of a vast colonial empire and that of its possessions in Europe, and in some of the latter (as in Italy, South and West Germany, and so on) the resources of a considerable bourgeois set-up. It will be only right to recall here that the nobility of the Southern Netherlands went over to Madrid's side, with the result that the land remained part of the Spanish state. It is incontestable, however, that the main reason why the Spanish government was able to fight on for what was obviously an unattainable goal was the psychological climate in Western Europe and the structure of international relations created by the ambient conflict.

The ambient conflict had a most negative effect on the international conditions in which the Dutch revolution was unfolding. It provided ideological and political possibilities for mobilising the forces of the European Counter-Reformation against the insurrectionists. At the same time, however, it was a stage within the framework of the ambient conflict, that relatively favoured the rebel Dutch. A big part was played by the fact that at that time the ambient conflict did not assume the shape of an all-European war, as it had in the early half of the 16th century. This reduced the aid to Philip II from the other forces of the Catholic Counter-Reformation, especially the Austrian Hapsburgs, while the activity against him of his main adversaries—the Porte, France and England—was largely unrestricted. True, the religious wars in

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

France prevented the latter from acting against the Spaniards more effectively, on the one hand, but reduced to nought the chances of using the French Catholic party against the rebel provinces of the Netherlands, on the other. More, the support that Philip II rendered the French Catholic League claimed a certain part of his available resources. And even more of these resources were being spent on the struggle against England in the two decades that preceded the sinking of the Spanish Armada.

Her struggle against Spain prompted Elizabeth I of England, though after some hesitation, to assist the Dutch "rebels". Meanwhile, Philip II's interference in the internal struggles in England and France, which flowed from the very logic of the ambient conflict, reduced to nought Spain's seemingly still remaining chances of victory in the Netherlands.

In the final analysis, not only revolutionary forces, bearers of the new, capitalist, mode of production, were operating against the Catholic camp. The far from revolutionary elements that were in one way or another facilitating the progressive development of society, also proved to be against it. This applied, among others, to the English court, which stood at the head of the moderate Reformation, and to the French authoritarian monarchy, which was then playing a positive part in the country's national consolidation.

The Dutch revolution altered the course of the ambient conflict. Instead of being one of the main sources of the financial and military power of the Hapsburgs, the Dutch possessions absorbed like a sponge the Spanish Crown's money and crack troops. The vulnerability of Philip II's possessions scattered all over Western Europe, and later also of his overseas colonies, increased visibly—and in the late 16th century also due largely to the Dutch "rebels'" actions on the seas. The Dutch revolution thus made a telling impact on the course of the ambient conflict by the very fact that Holland with its growing resources went over to the side of the foes of the Counter-Reformation. The evaluations of the contribution of that revolution to the ideology of the progressive

camp may differ, but, in any case, it cannot be ignored. But its main impact on the conflict was made by its eliminating the obstacles to the development of Dutch shipping and commerce, which had a far-reaching effect on 17th-century world trade. In the final analysis, the ambient conflict was not able to prevent the Netherlands revolution from winning or Holland from assuming a dominant role in world trade, which Charles V and Philip II had both been eager to retain as a material basis of their empire.

Reasons for Spanish interference in various countries multiplied, but Spain's objective capability for armed invasion diminished. One of the targets of Spanish interference was France, where the Reformation was making rapid headway in the middle of the century. In 1562, on the very eve of the civil wars (fought under a religious signboard and hence often called wars of religion), the Venetian ambassador in Paris reported a swift spread among the French of the views of their countryman, John Calvin, the "Genevan pope". The diplomat even wrote that only few people under forty were still faithful Catholics. Catholic historians portray the civil wars in France as a struggle for power among the grandes during the king's minority—as after the death of Charles V (in the 14th century) and Louis XI (in the 15th century), and later after the death of Henry IV and Louis XIII.

Similar wars in the latter half of the 16th century, writes clerical historian L. Christiani, were "named religious in the 18th century to discredit religion, whereas their contemporaries always called them civil wars or mere periods of unrest. They were wars," he adds, "that had their origins in the minority or insolvency [of the bearer] of the central power; they were also wars between rival feudal lords—the Guises versus the Bourbons and Chatillons."¹ It is said that a part truth can disguise a lie, but here a part lie distorts the truth.

There were, indeed, social reasons for the religious

¹ L. Christiani, *L'église à l'époque du concile de Trente*, Paris, 1948, p. 399.

wars. That is incontestable and equally as true as it is of the interne strife in the Middle Ages or the mid-17th century Fronde. These days, many a bourgeois historian feels compelled to admit, even though with some reservations, what has always been axiomatic for Marxist historiography: religious wars were no more than a form of civil war, of acute class struggle. The religious factor, which also had a relatively independent meaning, was in the general context an ideological wrapping that ensured the intrinsic cohesion of the embattled social forces and political groups.

As they developed, the civil wars in France increasingly became a type of dynastic struggle between the Bourbons, who headed the Protestant camp, and the Guises, who were the leaders of the extreme Catholics, for the throne that would be vacated after the passing of the last of the sons of Henry II and Catherine de Médicis. This dynastic confrontation kept France within the framework of the ambient conflict no less than the religious clash, above all because for Catherine de Médicis (who, in effect, ruled France during the successive reigns of her three sons—Francis II, Charles IX, and Henry III) enduring alliance with one of the parties in order to triumph over the other was impossible.

The Vindication of Catherine de Médicis

Catherine had had no power at first. In the lifetime of Henry II, her husband, she suffered the humiliations of looking on and seeing how he was manipulated by his haughty mistress, Diane de Poitiers, who, moreover, was twenty years the king's senior.

"What have you been reading, Madam?" Diane had asked her one night.

"I have been reading histories about this kingdom," the queen replied, smiling amiably, "and I discovered that at all times, habitually, harlots had run the affairs of kings."¹

¹ André Castelot, Alain Decaux, *Histoire de la France et des français*, Vol. 5, Plon-Perrin, Paris, 1971, p. 187.

During the successive reigns of her sons, Catherine managed to break this "habit". She also abandoned the one-sided gravitation in favour of the Counter-Reformation practised by Henry II (not without the influence of the same Diane de Poitiers).

All the time, France was exposed to the danger of a Spanish intervention aimed against the Huguenots. It did not take place for the sole reason that Madrid's forces were diverted to other purposes. Concealing his plans of conquest behind the pretext of promoting the interests of the faith, Philip II often sought to create the appearance that he was defending himself against the advancements of Protestantism. The Spanish king's consort, Elizabeth, daughter of Catherine de Médicis, wrote her mother in July 1561, at the very beginning of the religious wars, that nobody was more concerned about the threat to the Catholic faith in France than her husband since "Flanders and Spain were close by".¹

Catherine's attempts to reach an understanding with the Huguenots caused Philip to threaten her sharply and all but publicly. "Make the queen understand," he wrote to his ambassador in France, "that by following such a course her son will lose his kingdom as well as the obedience of his vassals."²

The papal nuncio reported to Rome that Catherine de Médicis, the queen, "does not believe in God".³ Most of her contemporaries were, indeed, inclined to make an absolute of the significance of religious quarrels. Not so Catherine. She attached so little importance to the controversies between churches, she was so used to thinking them unimportant as compared with the collision of material interests and with political contradictions that she at times ignored the relative significance of the religious factor.

Even after the third Council of Trent had defined the Catholic dogmas that divorced the Church

¹ Jean-H. Mariéjol, *Catherine de Médicis. 1519-1589*, Librairie Jules Tallandier, Paris, 1979, p. 167.

² De Lamar Jensen, op. cit., p. 21.

³ Jack Beeching, op. cit., p. 130.

of Rome from any form of Protestantism, the queen made vain plans of restoring religious unity through a conciliation of the two creeds. The only real alternative, however, inasmuch as it referred to France and not Europe as a whole, was to introduce religious toleration or to have one of the contending sides destroy the other.

The former solution, which proved highly favourable to the Crown, was promoted (as from 1563) by a body of men known as the *Politiques*. They firmly rejected the old idea that power reposed on religious tradition, as well as new idea that power came from a social contract. The *Politiques* stuck to the idea of the divine origins of monarchic power—the only idea that could secure the unity, stability, and sovereignty of the state, and make sure of peace and order.

For the *Politiques* religious problems were of secondary importance. They were prepared, therefore, to assert religious toleration if this was in the state's interest. It is, therefore, easy to see that the theory of the divine origins of royal power meant something socially different for the *Politiques* from what it was construed to mean later, in the 17th and 18th centuries. During the civil wars in France, the views of the *Politiques* were a justification for defending national statehood against pretenders to European hegemony, and, indeed, against the leading forces of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. Small wonder, therefore, that the *Politiques* aroused the suspicion of militant Catholics, this developing into outright hatred and hostility. The theoretical views of the *Politiques* were set forth in the pronouncements and writings of Michel de L'Hospital, the treatises of Jean Bodin, and also those of a number of then prominent jurists. The *Politiques* were joined by the queen-mother, though she did not always follow the course they recommended.

Michel de L'Hospital, who was chancellor of France from 1560 to 1568 and a follower of Erasmus, was so resolute an advocate of stopping religious wars that the Guises even began to doubt his loyalty to the Catholic Church. He was backed by people

who hailed from the humanist school, and by influential individuals from among the Huguenots and Catholics who held that the country's interests ranked higher than those of religion, and that the former made it imperative to have some degree of religious toleration. After L'Hospital's retirement, Catherine de Médicis, who in principle approved of his position, sometimes departed from and sometimes followed the course he recommended.

The fact that France remained within the framework of the ambient conflict made the unavoidable religious and dynastic wrangling of the inner struggle a serious threat to the recently attained national unity and, indeed, to the country's independence. Other powers lost no time to try and use inner struggle in France to their own advantage.

First of all, England...

Nicholas Throckmorton, diplomat and spy, and an advocate of resolute action against the opponents of Queen Elizabeth, was appointed ambassador to Paris in May 1559. The peace of Cateau-Cambrésis had just been concluded, ending the long-drawn-out war between the Valois and the Hapsburgs. The danger arose that France and Spain, the mightiest Catholic powers, would form a coalition—all the more perilous to England since Mary Stuart, a relative of the Guises who became the wife of the king of France, Francis II (1559-1560), was to occupy the throne of Scotland and had rights of succession to the English Crown. And to confirm these fears France did send a naval squadron to Scotland in January 1560 to aid the regent Mary Guise (mother of Mary Stuart), against the followers of the Reformation. A storm dispersed the fleet, delivering Queen Elizabeth from a menace that was probably no smaller than the one she faced nearly thirty years later, when the Spanish Armada set out against her.

England's secret diplomacy responded by inciting a religious war in France between Catholics and Protestants. Certainly, they would have clashed sooner or later without English interference, but Throckmorton was among the first to see the advantages this spelled for England. He wrote that if the matter were

skilfully handled, Queen Elizabeth "shall be able through Christendom to be both arbiter and umpire" instead of the king of Spain.¹

In 1562, English troops landed in Le Havre to aid the French Huguenots in their religious war. But England's help came too late. Besides, it was insufficient to avert the setback that befell the Huguenot party in that first phase of the religious wars which then spaced out at intervals over thirty-five years. In July 1563, Le Havre surrendered to the royal army, and English diplomacy was compelled to hastily conclude an agreement with the French court (i.e., in fact, with Catherine de Médicis).

For Philip II, too, it was most important to prevent an agreement between the French Catholics and the Huguenots, for that might have enabled the nobility of France, engrossed in internal strife after the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis, to engage in another war, this time against the Spanish army in the Netherlands.

In the early periods of the civil wars, in 1562, Charles IX had himself called on Spain to help him suppress the popular unrest in the south of France, but the very next year he hastily rejected such dangerous aid.

During the night of August 23/24, 1572 on the eve of St Bartholomew's Day, Catholics engaged in a mass slaughter of thousands of Huguenots in Paris—men and women, old men and infants. Catherine de Médicis is to have said that it was kind to be cruel to the Huguenots and cruel to be kind. The Spanish ambassador reported elatedly to Philip II: "As I write, they are killing them all, they are stripping them naked, dragging them through the streets, plundering the houses, and sparing not even children. Blessed be God who has converted the French princes to His cause! May He inspire their hearts to continue as they have begun." And Pope Gregory XIII exclaimed that the massacre pleased him more than fifty victories at

¹ A. L. Rowse, *Raleigh and the Throckmortons*, Macmillan & Co., London, 1962, p. 36.

Lepanto¹. That night of carnage staggered the imagination of contemporaries and descendants. (Which was one of the reasons why the Protestant massacres of Catholics prior to the Massacre on St Bartholomew's Day, such as the one at Nîmes on St Michael's Day in 1569, known as the Michelade, were so rarely mentioned.)

"For four hundred years, Catherine de Médicis, that black luminary, has been troubling and fascinating us... By virtue of her deeds and traits, augmented by the fantasies of many generations, she occupies a prominent place in our national mythology," writes Frenchman Ivan Cloulas, one of her latest biographers².

The hatred that Catherine inspired among her Protestant contemporaries was expressed vividly in a pamphlet, entitled, *Discours merveilleux de la vie, actions et déportements de la reine Catherine de Médicis*, whose author wrote of her, among other things: "A foreigner, an enemy who hated every one ... the daughter of a house of merchants that rose through usury ... and who was reared in atheism."³

There followed a full array of accusations: she was a poisoner, a murderer of thousands of Huguenots, the most bloodstained queen of all time. The 16th-century pamphleteers set the tone for the Enlightenment of the 18th, who were engrossed in exposing religious intolerance, and then for the Protestant and liberal historians of the next century, and for those many writers who wrote blood-curdling adventure stories against the setting of the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre, among whom Prosper Mérimée with his *La Chronique du Temps de Charles IX*, and that splendid narrator, Alexander Dumas, with his famous trilogy, *Queen Margot*, *The Lady of Monsoreau* and *The Forty-Five*. Catherine de Médicis, who had organised the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre, is pictured by those who know her from the works of liberal and

¹ Henri Hauser, *La prépondérance espagnole (1559-1660)*, Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 1940, p. 95.

² Ivan Cloulas, *Catherine de Médicis*, Fayard, Paris, 1979, p. 11.

³ Ibid.

Protestant historians of the past century, or rather from the novels of Dumas, as something next to a professional poisoner. But that was not so. And to bear me out, I refer you to one of Honoré de Balzac's philosophical sketches, as he called them, entitled, *About Catherine de Médicis*, where he observes that after the death of Henry II, her husband, the Florentine did not do away with his mistress Diane de Poitiers, who had been an object of the queen's deep hatred for many years, though she could have poisoned her with ease.

Present-day Western investigators are revising the traditionally harsh judgement, and are even reprimanding their predecessors for spreading what they say is a black legend about the queen-mother. "Let me point out," writes Philippe Erlanger, "that the Florentine, so notorious for crimes of this sort, had committed none of which history has any proof and which it could therefore record as a fact."¹ (Let me only add in parentheses that such crimes are never easy to prove, especially after a lapse of four centuries!) The death of Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, in Paris on June 9, 1572, was ascribed to poison administered by Catherine de Médicis. But that charge, maintained for several centuries, is no longer considered true. The Queen of Navarre was afflicted with tuberculosis. And a medical dissection showed she had an abscess of the right lung and a tumour of the brain.

The notion of Catherine being an inveterate poisoner was convincingly refuted early in the 20th century. Since then, the stories of the Florentine's poisons are left by most serious historians to the imagination of writers of romances.² "If Catherine had not been responsible for inciting the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre," writes one of her biographers, "would it have been too paradoxical to maintain that she was a fairly attractive figure in history?"³

¹ Philippe Erlanger, *La reine Margot ou la rebellion*, p. 77.

² Jean-H. Mariéjol, op. cit., p. 324.

³ Ibid., p. 611. To be sure, there is no consensus among historians to this day as to Catherine's merits or demerits. Jean Héritier, in his monograph, *Catherine de Médicis*, which was first published in 1939 and has since been reissued in a

Whether the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre during the night of August 23/24, 1572, had been carefully planned or whether it had been a decision made on the spur of the moment, a few hours before the slaughter began, is hard to say. Catherine de Médicis herself and her son, King Charles IX, preferred the former version.

That does not mean, of course, that this is true. The explanation probably is that the queen-mother and her royal son had initially assumed, for some time after the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre, that the break with the party of Huguenots was final, and decided to woo the Catholic camp. The Louvre felt it was profitable to portray its action as having been prompted above all by the aims of the ambient conflict. As for the Counter-Reformation, it stood to gain even more from accepting this explanation of the horrible slaughter. Cardinal of Lorraine, brother of the Duke of Guise, organised the publication in Rome in 1572 of a book by a certain Camillo Capilupi, *Lo strategemma di Carlo IX* (The Military Stratagem of Charles IX) which was a concocted account of the French government's policy, aimed at proving that the slaughter on St Bartholomew's Day had been planned and prepared in advance. The cardinal figured rightly that such a version of the events would make it more difficult for the French government to renew negotiations with the heretics.

But the Guises were mistaken if they thought that the obstacles for such negotiations were insuperable. The rapprochement with Spain was just another of the many zigzags in the policy of the French court, while the abrupt deterioration of relations with the Protestant powers, notably England, was obviously contrary to its interests. Besides, the Huguenots of France were not all destroyed. It became clear that new temporary compromises would have to be

dozen paintings, portrays her as an innocent victim of calumny, an eminent, uncompromising and bold stateswoman. At the colloquium on the 400th anniversary of the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre, however, she was described as a scheming, adroit and ferocious Florentine who certainly deserved her reputation.

reached. Soon after the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre, Catherine de Médicis re-established contacts with their leaders. In the autumn of 1572, the French court produced a new explanation of the slaughter, saying it was a response to a Protestant plot headed by Admiral Coligny who, as we know, was killed at the very beginning of the terrible carnage. According to this version, the Huguenots had been punished not for their faith but for high treason.

Catherine de Médicis had a secret agent, Sieur de Bouchavannes, in the Huguenot camp. He posed as a Protestant and had Coligny's confidence. De Bouchavannes informed Catherine that the admiral had convened the Huguenot leaders and discussed an earlier plan of capturing Paris, seizing the Louvre, and arresting the king. The coup was to take place on August 26. That, at least, was what de Bouchavannes was said to have reported. Catherine de Médicis declared that to prevent the coup she had had to eliminate a few of the Huguenot leaders, some five persons, perhaps even only three, including Coligny.¹ (Some Catholic historians still repeat her assurances.)

To be sure, the version of a Huguenot plot was not really believed from the beginning, whereas the story of the Catholic massacre having been planned beforehand gained extensive circulation. At least, most historians of the 19th century stayed with this version. It is also backed by the fact that, aside from Paris, the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre recurred in a number of other large towns, and possibly before word of the slaughter in Paris had reached them.² Still, this version, too, does not stand up to a critical check. Analysis of extant documents, of memoirs by contemporaries who had no reason for concealing the truth, leads to the following conclusion: the decision to loosen the carnage was taken just a few hours, or

¹ Hugh Ross Williamson, *Catherine de Medici*, Michael Joseph, London, 1973, pp. 215-216.

² *The Cambridge Modern History*, Vol. III (*The Wars of Religion*), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1904, p. 20. Such synchronisation could also be the result of the same psychological climate prevailing in these provincial towns.

at most days, before midnight August 23/24. It follows that "the terrible massacre of St Bartholomew's Day was more a result of mounting political pressures and Catherine's own fear than of premeditated treachery on her part".¹

It might seem, as a result, that this conclusion set St Bartholomew's Day Massacre apart from the events that flowed directly from the ambient conflict, making it just one, albeit the bloodiest, episode of the long-drawn-out civil wars in France. But this judgement is wrong. The organisers of the massacre may not have been moved by the aims of the ambient conflict. But the possibility of arousing the townsmen of Paris (and of other towns) would never have arisen in the absence of the psychological climate created by the ambient conflict and sustained by the militant wing of the Catholic clergy, naturally including the Jesuits.

In substance, the controversy between Catherine de Médicis and Admiral Coligny, which culminated in the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre, did not at all concern the question of whether the peace concluded between the Catholics and Protestants should be maintained, and not even the terms on which it should be maintained—for on these points they were in agreement—but what should be done to make it more lasting. Catherine's plan was to get France out of the ambient conflict by securing a reconciliation of the two parties. This would be to the advantage of the state and—which was much more important for the queen-mother—of the house of Valois.

Admiral Coligny, on the other hand, held that domestic peace, guaranteeing the interests of the Huguenots, would be lasting only if France became involved in a war with the chief power of the Catholic camp. What he wanted, in other words, was for France to fight that war outside the framework of the ambient conflict, for this would objectively promote the cause of the Protestant camp. In effect, Coligny's plan was to restore the situation that had existed in France before the civil wars. His plan envisaged alli-

¹ De Lamar Jensen, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

ance with England, Tuscany, Venice, the German principalities, even the papacy, against Philip II.

Coligny's plan, however, was not practicable, if only for the fact that the Pope and Venice had, along with Spain, joined the Holy League formed against Turkey, and had won the naval battle at Lepanto on October 7, 1571.

England, too, fearing that the French would capture Flanders, made some overtures vis-à-vis Spain. And the German Protestant princes showed not the slightest intention of becoming involved. In sum, France faced the prospect of fighting Philip's powerful armies alone. Furthermore, the Catholic camp was applying efforts to prevent an open break between Paris and Madrid. This was the special concern of Salviati, the papal nuncio in France and a blood relation of the queen-mother. Philip, for his part, was unsparing of friendly gestures, manoeuvring for all he was worth.

Under the influence of Coligny, who alone in the Royal Council favoured war, Charles IX permitted a 5,000-strong unit of French Protestants under the command of François de Hengest, seigneur de Genlis, to come to the assistance of the township of Mons in the Netherlands besieged by the Spaniards. Duke of Alva's troops routed the French unit. And Alva made the most of the fears at the English court that the French were planning to conquer the Southern Netherlands. Queen Elizabeth gave Alva to understand that despite the alliance she had with Paris, she would never help the French to carry out such plans. And the Duke of Alva lost no time to let Catherine de Médicis know of the English demarche.

So, in a certain sense, it was English diplomacy's double game that served as one of the reasons for the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre. Catherine must have come to the conclusion that she either had to consent to fighting what she knew would be a hopeless war against Spain or eliminate Coligny who was gaining ever more influence over Charles IX and was thus undermining the positions of the queen-mother who ruled the country on behalf of her weak-willed son given to hysterics.

When sanctioning the murder of Coligny, the Florentine evidently expected the Huguenots to hit back, so that she would at once get rid of the leaders of the two hostile camps and, buttressing the positions of the throne as an arbiter between them, manage to prevent any more religious wars. This was precisely why the queen-mother, while plotting the admiral's assassination, was hastening the preparations for the wedding of her daughter Margaret with the other Huguenot leader, Henry of Navarre.

The highlights in the life of Margaret of Valois (Queen Margot) were most directly related to the ambient conflict. The idea of her marrying Henry of Navarre, a heretic, could provoke nothing but outrage in Pope Pius V. And without his permission, the marriage could not be concluded, for that was contrary to Church canon. At the end of 1571, Pius V wrote to Charles IX: "Our duty forbids us to ever consenting to a union which we consider an insult to God." The general of the Society of Jesus was specifically instructed to convince Margaret that she was jeopardising her salvation by agreeing to the marriage. Instead, the pontiff suggested that the princess should marry the king of Portugal. Such an alternative had, indeed, been only recently discussed in Paris, but was abandoned after an event that, on the face of it, did not directly concern France: the naval battle at Lepanto. The defeat suffered by the Ottoman navy, whose effects on the course of the war were initially exaggerated, prompted Catherine de Médicis to seek conciliation with the Huguenots in order to confront Philip II, for at that time the Spanish king's victory over the rebellious Netherlands had begun to seem close.

In the few months before the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre, Charles was eager for his sister's wedding to take place quickly in the belief that by buttressing the peace at home it would give him a free hand to fight a war against Spain.

Meanwhile, the sudden death of Pius V in May 1572 brought about no change in Rome's position: the new Pope, Gregory XIII, also refused to allow Margaret of Valois to marry Henry of Navarre. It

was thereupon decided to act despite Rome, for hadn't one of the Huguenot leaders, Henry of Bourbon, Prince of Condé, set an example by marrying Mary of Cleves, a Catholic, without the permission of the Roman throne on August 10.

Catherine de Médicis also decided that such a trifle would not deter her, and ordered the fabrication of a letter from the French ambassador in Rome, stating that the desired written permission of the Pope would soon arrive. This stratagem put an end to the vacillations of Cardinal Charles de Bourbon, who was, in fact, heartily in favour of his nephew marrying the French king's sister. At this point it was not difficult to find a priest who would perform the marriage rites. The wedding was to take place on August 18. On August 14, Catherine sent the Governor of Lyons, M. de Mandelot, an order to detain all couriers to and from Italy until August 18. By so doing, the queen-mother wanted to prevent any letter from Gregory XIII forbidding the marriage from reaching Paris, and any dispatch of the papal nuncio about the imminent marriage in Paris from reaching the Pope. Anyone reading Dumas's *Queen Margot* gets the impression that Catherine sought the destruction of Henry of Navarre. In fact, however, she wanted the very opposite, as the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre bore out: when the Huguenot leaders, Henry of Navarre and Prince of Condé, were brought before Charles IX through the hell of that bloody night, the figure of his mother loomed up behind the king.

Waving his dagger, Charles grunted threateningly: "The Mass, death, or the Bastille!"

Already in his younger years, Henry of Navarre proved to be the adroit politician who 21 years later decided that "Paris was worth a Mass". He agreed to be converted to Catholicism. The Prince of Condé, on the other hand, refused, and the king in zealous fury swung his dagger. His hand was halted by Catherine. Tearfully, she pleaded with her son to refrain from punishing the prince. And the tears shed by the inspirer of mass murders were not crocodile tears at all. She needed Henry of Navarre and Henry of Bourbon as a counterweight to Henry Guise, who, being head

of the Catholic camp, would after the elimination of the Huguenots become uncrowned ruler of Paris. And, as usual, Charles bowed to his mother's will, ordering the two Henrys to be placed under arrest in their chambers.

English historian A. L. Rowse wrote recently that Catherine had evidently tried to win peace, and expressed sympathy slightly touched by sarcasm, for that "much-maligned woman. It was unfortunate," he wrote, "that nobody trusted her." A Machiavellian politician in the good sense she could not understand why people should insist on burning, or being burned, at the stake for meaningless ideas.¹ By means of the carnage on St Bartholomew's Day, Catherine de Médicis was seeking to kill two birds with one stone: end the civil war that kept France involved in the ambient conflict, and prevent an outside war that would also involve France in that conflict, even if at first for different reasons from those of the other powers. And for a time, Catherine de Médicis managed to achieve the second goal, though the Huguenots were not destroyed and the civil war did break out with fresh force.

Catherine wrote to Philip II concerning the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre that her son's measures against the Huguenot "plot" augmented "the amity between the two Crowns".² She even said she would not mind if her son Henry, Duke of Anjou (the future King Henry III), married Philip's daughter. On learning about the massacre in Paris, Philip, as the French ambassador testified, began to laugh—perhaps the only time in his public life. Nor did he conceal his gratification from the Frenchman.³ And I wonder if this gratification derived partly from the thought that the blood-stained Catholic victory would weaken France's international position? Was Catherine's favourite astrologer Côme Ruggieri wrong when he said she had acted in favour of the king of Spain?⁴

¹ *History Today*, April 1973, p. 294.

² Ivan Cloulas, op. cit., p. 299.

³ Jean-H. Mariéjol, op. cit., p. 289.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 319.

Typically, Hapsburg diplomats and propaganda agents used the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre to discredit the French king and drive a wedge between him and his Protestant allies in Europe. The slaughter in Paris did evoke anger and alarm in the Protestant part of the continent. Queen Elizabeth received the French ambassador in mourning, though she did not reject the official French version that the slaughter had been a punishment meted out to plotters. Soon, the English queen even resumed negotiations concerning her marrying Duke François d'Alençon, who was Catherine de Médicis' youngest son. While assuring Philip II and the Pope that destruction of heresy was the everlasting aim of French politics, Catherine sent a special ambassador, Gaspard de Schomberg, to reassure the Protestant princes in Germany. Schomberg told them "what had been done to Admiral Coligny and his accomplices was not done out of hatred of the new religion or its extirpation, but solely to punish them for their villainous conspiracy".¹

Word of the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre resonated even in distant Russia. The somewhat unexpected "outrage" expressed by Ivan the Terrible in a letter to Emperor Maximilian II, should be seen in the context of the tsar's abortive attempt to prevail on the Hapsburgs not to support Russia's antagonists in the Livonian War, promising him joint action against the Turkish sultan, ally of the French king. At just about this time, the destruction of a crack Turkish army at Astrakhan (1569) and the rout of the Crimean Tatars at the village of Molodi some 60 kilometres south of Moscow (1572), marked the biggest setback yet for Turko-Tatar expansion in Eastern Europe.²

¹ Ibid., p. 291.

² In parallel with the main ambient conflicts of that epoch, another conflict, also in religious wrappings (the confrontation between the Catholic and Orthodox creeds) but with an entirely different meaning, had broken out. In substance, it was an attempt by Russia to win access to the Baltic Sea and thus breach the blockade raised in the early half of the 16th century to cut off Russia from the countries of Western Europe. The "Moscow peril" ended the rivalry between the Hapsburg Empire and Poland, leading to close cooperation between them, especially during the Livonian War (1556-

The massacre on St Bartholomew's Day had consequences that Catherine had not anticipated. Until August 1572, the Huguenots distinguished between the militant Catholics and the lawful royal power. They even declared that they were defending the interests of the crown against plotters, meaning the Guises. But after the bloodbath of August 24 and the next few days, the situation changed. In 1573, François Hotman, a Huguenot jurist, published a treatise, *Franco-Gallia*, in which he favoured a monarchy where the king's authority was restricted by a States General and the aristocratic institutions. In the following year, 1574, Theodore de Bèze, published a treatise saying that since God created nations and nations created kings, the monarch's authority reposed upon the consent of his subjects. Failure by the king to perform his functions was a lawful reason, he wrote, for deposing him. Subsequent Huguenot treatises went to the length of justifying the execution or assassination of tyrant kings. De Bèze, one of the closest associates of Henry of Navarre (later Henry IV) published another treatise, *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos*, in 1579, elaborating on the idea of combating tyranny.¹ Soon, the various ideas were borrowed by the Catholic camp, which adapted them to its own aims.

The St Bartholomew's Day Massacre caused no changes in Catherine de Médicis' foreign policy. It may be of interest to note that, if we are to believe the reports of Philip II's spies, in her negotiations with the German Protestant princes in December 1573 the queen-mother agreed to discuss Coligny's old project of a French incursion into the Netherlands (which, indeed, did take place, though some years later).

At the end of 1573, seeing her attempts to suppress Protestantism in France fail, Catherine de Médicis again tried to secure an agreement, as she had done in

1582). The Polish barrier enabled the Catholic camp to prevent the State of Muscovy from participating directly in European political affairs. It might only be added that its alliance with the Hapsburgs had a most negative effect on Poland's historical destiny.

¹ De Lamar Jensen, op. cit., pp. 23-28.

the several months before the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre. The Politiques, who had been called to power, and especially Constable Anne de Montmorency, again raised the question of going to war against Spain, and again Catherine condemned the idea. Her youngest son François d'Alençon took part in a conspiracy jointly inspired by the Politiques and Protestants. It envisaged a rising against Charles IX and the transfer of power to François d'Alençon. But the plan failed. The attempted escape of François d'Alençon and of Henry of Navarre, which was to have taken place on April 10, 1574, fell through. On April 14, Spanish troops crushed the detachment of one of the participants in the conspiracy in a battle at Moor Curheid. The cowardly Duke d'Alençon did not hesitate to betray his accomplices. Charles IX ordered the arrest of some of them, including Constable Montmorency and Maréchal Artus de Cossé. This, however, only served to unite the Politiques and Huguenots still closer, and a new uprising began. Queen Elizabeth of England intervened on behalf of Henry of Navarre and the Duke d'Alençon. But her appeal was rejected.

In 1573, Catherine de Médicis managed to have her favourite son, Duke Henry of Anjou, elected to the Polish throne. With a Valois at their back, the Austrian Hapsburgs would now be more cautious in their dealings with France. Charles IX, glad to be rid of his brother whom he did not like, hastened his departure for Warsaw, which had been put off several times. To be sure, the new Polish king's thoughts were occupied with returning to Paris the moment he got word of his sick brother's demise, so as to occupy the vacated French throne.

Charles IX passed away at the height of another Huguenot uprising, on May 30, 1574. Called home urgently from Poland by Catherine, the Duke of Anjou succeeded to the French crown as Henry III. In the latter half of the 1570s, the new king thought again and again of declaring war on Spain, and enthroning in the Netherlands François, the Duke of Alençon, who had become the Duke of Anjou when Henry had succeeded to the throne, and who was a nuisance to

the king in France. In the meantime, Catherine de Médicis was, quite unrealistically as it turned out, planning a marriage between her youngest son and her own niece, the Infanta Isabella, daughter of Philip II, who would have the Netherlands as part of her dowry.

A Web of Conspiracies

The second stage of the ambient conflict pushed to the forefront the methods of secret warfare, which had played no conspicuous part in the early half of the 16th century. The opening stage of the struggle within the framework of that conflict essentially involved the emperor and the German Protestant princes, who had the support of the foes of the Hapsburgs in the Catholic camp. In the second stage, the struggle spread to all Western Europe, though it did not become a universal war and assumed the form of several intertwining conflicts in the Netherlands, in France, and in England and Scotland.

Civil wars turned into wars between nations, they dragged out over long periods, sometimes decades. Nearly every country in Western and Central Europe had a more or less considerable, and persecuted, religious minority associated by its creed with the ruling circles of countries hostile to theirs. This brought to the forefront various methods of secret warfare, doubly so because the political structure of the various states of that time made palace revolutions or coups d'état, on the pretext of upholding the dynastic rights of a pretender, a most effective means of deposing governments. In the final analysis, the aggressive side was the Counter-Reformation. But not in each case, and not at each stage of the struggle. And that made the secret war especially large in scale, and gave it a vagueness that obscured the true role and true intentions of the belligerents.

Quite a number of riddles punctuate the history of the Counter-Reformation's secret war against England. At that time, and later too, a considerable part of the English were Catholics. It may even be true

that some English diplomats and spies were also Catholics. The Catholic conspiracies were concentrated around Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, who, as I have already recalled, had dynastic rights of succession to the English throne. Mary Stuart's dramatic life story has attracted the attention of great poets, writers and artists. Suffice it to mention Friedrich Schiller and Stefan Zweig. And, indeed, few 16th-century figures had been as vivid an embodiment of the ambient conflict as Mary Stuart. Among her contemporaries, only her secret correspondent of many many years, the morose inmate of the Escorial, Philip II, may have equalled the impetuous and romantic Queen of Scots in that respect. Defeated by the Scottish Protestant lords, Mary Stuart fled to England. Elizabeth ordered her arrest and organised a trial, professedly to clear her of the charge of having killed Lord Henry Darnley, her second husband.

During this first trial, one of the members of the tribunal Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, in effect went over to Mary Stuart's side. His hatred of Chief Minister Lord Burghley, and of Elizabeth's favourite, Earl of Leicester, and of their anti-Spanish foreign policy, and mainly, the enticing aim of winning the Scottish crown, prompted the Duke of Norfolk to seek Mary Stuart's hand. The infuriated Elizabeth ordered the duke to be accused of high treason, inasmuch as the Scottish queen had not renounced her right to the English crown (Mary herself, it is true, referred only to her right of succession to Elizabeth's throne, not of replacing Elizabeth. But this was ignored by the English government). In 1569, an uprising erupted in the northern counties of England. The people's discontent, as on many other occasions during the Reformation, escalated into a movement under the Catholic banner.

It may be recalled that in February 1570, Pope Pius V excommunicated Elizabeth, though she did not belong to the Catholic Church. The bull to that effect relieved Elizabeth's subjects of their vow of loyalty to the "heretic queen". The bull was issued on the assumption that it would be welcomed by the rebels, though, by the time it was published, the rebellion had been brutally suppressed. The rebels failed

to free Mary Stuart, while the Duke of Norfolk, whom the Catholic feudal lords who headed the uprising intended to make commander-in-chief of the rebel army, betrayed his accomplices in a fit of craven fear, and, coming to London at Elizabeth's command, was imprisoned in the Tower.

Since there was no direct evidence against the Duke of Norfolk, he was eventually released from prison but kept under house detention. This did not prevent the duke from becoming involved in the Ridolfi conspiracy. Roberto Ridolfi, a Florentine banker whose name was given to the plot, was an agent of the Pope of Rome, King Philip II, and the latter's bloodstained viceroy in the Netherlands, the Duke of Alva. The Italian had close ties with Don Guerau de Spes, the Spanish ambassador in England, and Catholic Bishop of Ross, John Leslie, Mary Stuart's ambassador at the English court, a libertine and faithless coward. During a secret meeting with Ridolfi, the Duke of Norfolk promised that if he were given a cash subsidy, he would start an uprising and hold out until a 6,000-men Spanish army arrived from the Netherlands. The plot envisaged Elizabeth's assassination.

In April 1570, English customs officers detained Charles Bailly, of Flanders, carrying coded messages from Ridolfi, who had gone to the Netherlands, to certain English conspirators. William Herle, government spy and agent provocateur posing as a zealous Catholic, was put in Bailly's cell, and managed to win his confidence. The letters found on Bailly's person were decoded and compromised both Mary Stuart and the Duke of Norfolk. To save his life when arrested, Bishop John Leslie betrayed the plot and said much else. For example, he accused Mary Stuart of having killed her husband, and thereupon sent her a harsh message, and also hurriedly made up a fawning sermon in Queen Elizabeth's honour.

"A flayed priest, a fearful priest!" Mary Stuart exclaimed angrily upon reading the message of her bishop ambassador.¹

¹ D. McN. Lockie, "The Political Career of the Bishop of Ross, 1568-80", in *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, Vol. IV, No. 2, 1954, p. 110.

Norfolk's trial was really a mock trial. The law was flouted—as it was, for that matter, at most of the other political trials of that day, aimed at eliminating an adversary rather than at determining the truth. The judges, and only peers of England could be judges, were carefully selected from among the Duke of Norfolk's bitterest enemies. The defendant was not given time to prepare his defence and, despite precedent, was forbidden to invite a lawyer. Chief witnesses gave evidence under duress or torture. A special *Declaration* was issued, vindicating the royal commission that conducted the investigation. The *Declaration* pointed out that only persons who had deliberately committed criminal acts and who refused to admit them, had been tortured. The minutes of the investigation were obviously falsified, the questioning was so conducted as to completely obscure the thought of a possible police provocation if such had occurred.

The trial of the Duke of Norfolk was on January 16, 1572. His execution was to take place on February 8, but was postponed at the last moment on the queen's orders to February 28, and then once more to April 12. Elizabeth was obviously unsure of her ground. Perhaps, she was even prepared to commute the death sentence to life imprisonment. But by that time a new plot was uncovered—this time to liberate the duke. So, on July 2, 1572, the Duke of Norfolk was executed. In his last word, he denied that he had ever agreed to a mutiny and to a Spanish invasion, and he rejected Catholicism.

On the eve of the 400th anniversary of the Ridolfi plot, historian Francis Edwards, a member of the Society of Jesus, published a new interpretation of that widely-known episode in England's history.¹ Referring to a variety of circumstantial evidence, Edwards sought to prove that Ridolfi, Baily, and a number of other conspirators had been double agents, and that the plot was fabricated from beginning to end by William Cecil's, Lord Burghley's army of spies, which,

¹ Francis Edwards, *The Marvellous Chance. Thomas Howard, Fourth Duke of Norfolk and the Ridolfi Plot, 1570-1572*, Rupert Hart-Davis, London, 1968.

indeed, explains the extraordinary ease of discovering the alleged plot. Just imagine the situation of the main conspirators, Edwards says. As from March 1571 at the latest, the arrested Mary Stuart and the Duke of Norfolk, as well as John Leslie and the Spanish ambassador, Guerau de Spes, had been completely isolated from each other. They were apprised that their correspondence with each other was read by Elizabeth's spies. They also knew the danger of trying to correspond secretly. If they had any contact, it was through the persons who had had access to all four of them. These persons were few: William Barker, secretary to the Duke of Norfolk, and Ridolfi. In other words, the chief conspirators could learn of the plans of the other three only from what Ridolfi or Barker would pass on. Hence, if the courier preferred, for some reason, to tell them something that differed from what he had heard, the conspirators were bound to fall prey to false information, which none of them could check. Consequently, we must distinguish two things in the depositions of each of the conspirators—first, what they say of their own actions, and, second, what they say with reference to their accomplices. The first refers to what the conspirator really knew, though he could conceal or distort the facts. And the second refers only to what he had learned from someone else (and what was, possibly, false). In their depositions, each of the conspirators tried to minimise his own role and to shift the main burden of responsibility to the others.

But such is the picture we get if we assume that the conspirators received essentially correct information about the plans of their accomplices. If we allow, however, that all the chief conspirators received false information about each other, the picture changes drastically. In that case, the plea made by each of them that he had had no intention of asking Spain to intervene or of deposing Elizabeth, may be taken to mean that there had been no plot at all. It is possible that the truth lay somewhere in-between, that there had been some talk on the subject and that William Cecil's secret service presented it as a case of full-blown high treason.

Such is the concept of Francis Edwards. Whatever we may think of it, he essentially ignored the negotiations that had taken place between the Queen of Scots and the Duke of Alva, which are amply proved by the papers seized from Mary Stuart's followers after her enemies captured Dumbarton Castle in April 1571. Trying to make his point, the Jesuit historian ignores the degree to which Ridolfi's plans reflected the interests of Mary Stuart and the Duke of Norfolk—and this alone arouses doubt as to the Scottish queen's and the Duke's disapproval of these plans.

It may be recalled that William Cecil, like Queen Elizabeth herself, believed in 1571 they could achieve the aims of English policy without direct armed confrontation with Spain, on which Elizabeth's favourite, the Earl of Leicester, and her chief of police and intelligence, Francis Walsingham, later insisted.

Was it not possible, after all, that provoking the Ridolfi plot could have brought about such a confrontation, could have spurred Alva and Philip II to action, and furthered a rapprochement between France and Spain? If William Cecil had provoked the plot, could he not have asked himself that question? Francis Edwards has succeeded in casting doubt on the usual interpretation of the Ridolfi plot. Most historians, however, continued to stick to the official version, though they admit that Ridolfi had been a windbag, that Philip II and the Duke of Alva knew him for a windbag, and that therefore they attached little importance to his promises and projects.¹

The gradual invigoration of the Dutch liberation struggle against Spain necessitated important political decisions on the part of the English government. London permitted English volunteers to join the Sea Beggars and the troops of William of Orange, but, at the same time, it feared their success might facilitate a French invasion into the southern provinces of the Netherlands, into Flanders. That would be more un-

¹ Kenneth R. Andrews, *Elizabethan Privateering. English Privateering During the Spanish War. 1585-1603*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1964, p. 6; Paul Johnson, *Elizabeth I. A Study in Power and Intellect*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1974, pp. 182-187.

desirable for the English than even Alva's victory.

In early June 1572, Lord Burghley drew up a memorandum on the Flanders question, probably for his colleagues in the Privy Council. The memorandum envisaged the sending of agents into Flanders to determine the mood of the people and to examine the fortifications. It also envisaged sending trusted people to Louis, Count of Nassau, the ally of the insurgent Dutch, and to Cologne to determine the intentions of the German princes. It was also necessary to find out if Alva was capable of repulsing a French assault. If he was, both sides should be allowed to settle their dispute by themselves, if not, the Spanish viceroy should be secretly informed of England's intention to come to his aid and prevent the Flanders ports from falling into French hands. The Duke of Alva would be asked to provide assurances that he merely intended to deliver the people of Flanders from unbearable oppression, and would not introduce the Inquisition.

Soon thereafter, word of the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre in Paris reached England. The English Protestants were enraged. The explications of the French ambassador, Fenelon de la Mothe, that the Huguenots were not punished for their faith but for conspiring against the lawful government, and his appeals to keep up the Anglo-French alliance were, as we already know, received in frigid silence by Queen Elizabeth and Lord Burghley. (Fenelon de la Mothe protested against secret English aid to the Protestant rebels at La Rochelle.)

In the autumn of 1572, Burghley was obviously in favour of a partial agreement with Philip II, particularly concerning English property in the Netherlands and Spanish property in England. Here we must recall that English pirates had captured Spanish ships carrying bullion back in 1568. To which the Spanish responded by confiscating English property in the Netherlands, with Elizabeth's government, which denied any association with the pirates, striking back by requisitioning Spanish property in England. As a result, Spain was an obvious loser, even if the subsequent capture of many more Spanish ships by English pirates in the English Channel and the Strait of Dover is

not counted. This loot left Elizabeth an ample margin to make good the losses of English merchants whose goods had been confiscated by the Spanish in the Netherlands, and, besides, to line her own pocket. The Duke of Alva, for his part, ever needful of money to pay his mercenary troops, sold the confiscated English goods.

In short, the Spanish and a few English merchants were the losers all round, while the two highly-placed predators had no reason for special displeasure. The English were in no haste to come to an agreement for the simple reason that this would interfere with further piracy. At long last, however, the wish to restore the traditional trading with the Netherlands prompted the signing of the Nijmegen Convention in April 1573. Alva's replacement by the more cautious Don Luis de Requesens as viceroy relieved tensions in Anglo-Spanish relations still more, but only temporarily, for the aims of the two powers were irreconcilable.

After the Nijmegen Convention it seemed English policy was turning pro-Spanish. In July 1574, Spanish diplomat Bernardino de Mendoza came to London on a goodwill mission. He was gorgeously received, and conducted long talks with the queen's chief advisers, Lord Burghley, the Earl of Leicester, and Sir Christopher Hatton. Expensive gifts were showered upon him—golden chains, horses, hunting dogs.

But the secret war against Spain did not cease. Lord Burghley continued to personally supervise some of the English agents abroad. Among these, a certain John Lee, whose reports are extant in English archives. To believe Lee, he came from the gentry and was a merchant of some means who had emigrated to Antwerp in the late 1560s after a scandalous clash with his wife's family. Being a Catholic, he was for this reason chosen to spy on English Catholics who had emigrated to the Netherlands, including leaders of the recent Catholic uprising, Earl of Westmoreland, Francis Norton, and others, who were liable to become tools of a Spanish intervention against England. John Lee's main job was to prevail on the more influential of them to beg for Elizabeth's pardon and to return to England. William Cecil hoped thereby to be-

head the emigrants' movement in the Netherlands. It stands to reason that this was not to the taste of the Spanish authorities who, as John Lee felt, had been deliberately informed of his efforts. In October 1572, Lee was apprehended, but managed at the last moment to destroy the more incriminating of his papers. In April 1573, he was arraigned before a tribunal. Copies of his letters to Burghley figured at the trial as proof of his spying. On this occasion, however, the English government displayed great industry in saving its agent, taking advantage of the favourable change in its relations with Spain.

The Earl of Leicester wrote a personal letter to the Duke of Alva. As a result, Lee was released. The absence of evidence about his further fate in the archives may mean that Burghley lost interest in his agent after the latter had been exposed. But it may also mean that subsequently Lee figured in secret papers under another name.

The revival of apparently normal, if not friendly, relations with Spain greatly complicated England's relations with the Dutch. The English volunteers who had fought on the Dutch side, were recalled. Elizabeth warned that if Alva expelled the English emigrants, she would expel the rebel Dutch representatives from England. She repeatedly offered to mediate a cease-fire that would restore the power of Philip II provided he recognised the old liberties of the Dutch. Mediation by the German emperor led to a conference of the belligerents at Breda in March 1575. It ended in failure and could hardly have ended otherwise. As for the English offer, the Spanish turned it down politely. The war continued. And it seemed the situation of the rebels was becoming critical. Hence, if Elizabeth refused to help the rebels, two almost equally unpleasant possibilities would arise for England: either the spread of Philip II's absolute power over all the Netherlands or the Dutch accepting French assistance.

Meanwhile, maintaining contacts with the rebels through the usual diplomatic channels was difficult: the English ambassador at the Spanish viceroy's court, Sir Thomas Wilson, informed Burghley that he was

constantly under Requesens's vigilant eye.

Only methods of secret diplomacy and intelligence were practicable. The ink had not dried on the Nijmegen Convention when William Herle, who had changed a prison stool pigeon's job for that of secret diplomatic agent, appeared in Holland. In May 1573, Herle returned to England with a letter from William of Orange to Burghley, requesting financial aid. Another active agent of the English in the rebel camp in 1574 was a certain Captain Edward Chester, who had earlier commanded a group of English volunteers.

Frédéric Perrenot de Champagney, a trusted emissary of Don Luis de Requesens, arrived in London at the end of January 1576 to prevail on the English to stop helping the Dutch. Champagney, who was governor of Antwerp, held long talks with Lord Burghley, and in the process kept changing his opinion of England's intentions. He was received by the queen, who suddenly emitted a long tirade against the Dutch Calvinists seeking to abolish the monarchy; she added that Philip II was her old friend and that she had not forgotten his protecting her during the reign of Queen Mary. This audience completely confused Champagney. He did not know what to think—which, evidently, had been the queen's purpose. In March, Champagney returned to Holland empty-handed.

London did not hold sumptuous receptions for any Dutch emissaries. Indeed, Lord Burghley had no direct dealings with them. The Dutch spoke to William Herle, and it was up to them to accept or reject the advice of that highly eloquent gentleman. And who could forbid William Herle to write up these meetings for his old benefactor, Lord Burghley? It is only fair to add, however, that neither the Spanish nor the Dutch ever obtained firm promises of aid, for on every occasion second thoughts seemed to overtake Elizabeth. (Still, according to Spanish evidence, ships laden with arms and ammunition for the Dutch rebels departed one after another from English ports in 1576.)

The next two or three years were a time of major setbacks for the Spanish in the Netherlands, and the reason for England to conceal its relations with Wil-

liam of Orange dropped away. This was an additional impulse for intensifying Spain's secret war against England.

The Ridolfi plot was but a link in a long chain of conspiracies. Some, it is true, were sponsored by the English secret service. Don Bernardino de Mendoza, involved in one such conspiracy (the plot of Francis Throckmorton), was declared *persona non grata* in January 1584. The Spanish ambassador departed with the following words: "Bernardino de Mendoza was not born to disturb countries but to conquer them."

Mendoza moved to Paris, where, secretly of course, his chief adversary, English ambassador Sir Edward Stafford, entered his service. In the spring of 1587 Stafford began to transmit or, more precisely, to sell secret information to the Spaniards. Historians have not reached consensus yet on whether Stafford was acting off his own bat or plying Don Mendoza with false information on the instructions of his chief, Francis Walsingham.

It is impossible to determine who initiated the chief battles in the secret war of the middle and latter 1580s unless we survey the whole picture of the ambient conflict in those years. It changed radically from what it had been just a few years before, and precisely in places where the outcome of the conflict hung in the balance.

In the Netherlands, the scales weighed strongly in favour of the Spanish. Owing to the change of heart of the nobility of the southern, chiefly Catholic, part of the country, Flanders had again come under the power of the Spanish. In France, Don Mendoza had become a backstage adviser and inspirer of the militant Catholics. The Catholic League, which he had engineered, became one of the organisations of the Counter-Reformation on an international plane, and pursued its aims. Since the Guises were now most closely connected with Spain, the possible replacement of Elizabeth by their relation, Mary Stuart, would not enhance French influence and would make England a vassal of Spain.

The plans of the Catholic camp now centred on undermining England's resistance to the Counter-Refor-

mation as represented by the universal monarchy of the Hapsburgs. For this frontal attack to be successful, it was to be mounted covertly, by means of a new plot aimed at enthroning Mary Stuart. But such plans were no secret for the English government. Not only because of the skill of English spies, but because they were easy to guess: had not analogous plans been drawn up before over something like 15 years. True, previously the plans were never carried into effect, and no few plotters had had their heads chopped off. But the decisive factor of success—Madrid's readiness to risk its navy and its battle-steeled Flanders army to overthrow Elizabeth—was still missing at that time. On the other hand, with victory in the Netherlands looming close, and the favourable outlook of the Catholic League in France, the situation was changing. No risk looked too unjustified, since victory over England was becoming possible and would turn all Western Europe into an undivided Hapsburg protectorate. Such was the objective situation and such the mood of Philip II when a secret message of Mary, Queen of Scots, a Catholic who had languished in English bondage for nearly twenty years, was delivered to him.

The message was received through Don Mendoza, who had made contact with Mary Stuart through her agents, Thomas Morgan in Paris and Gilbert Gifford in England, the latter having close contacts with the French embassy in London. Neither Don Mendoza nor Thomas Morgan, of course, suspected that Gilbert Gifford, that urbane gentleman from Staffordshire, was, despite his youth, a long-time double spy. Through Gifford, Walsingham managed to fabricate the famous Babington plot, whose participants swore to kill Elizabeth and initiated secret correspondence with Mary Stuart, which, subsequently, served as proof of her consent to their plans. Walsingham's men not only made copies of this correspondence, but, having learned the art of faking handwritings, evidently added to the letters whatever Sir Francis Walsingham wished to see in them. And what he wished to see was proof that Mary Stuart unambiguously approved of the intention to kill Elizabeth. This would create a convenient pretext for executing the dan-

gerous captive. And though some of Mary Stuart's letters raise serious doubts as to their authenticity, this is hardly true of the messages she sent Philip II. On May 26, 1586, the Scottish queen sent Don Mendoza a most indiscreet reply to his two letters, expressing grief that her son James, who ruled Scotland, persisted in his Protestant heresy. Mary's letter contained the following statement:

"I have resolved that in case my son does not submit to the Catholic Church before my death (which I see very little hope of as long as he stays in Scotland), I will cede and grant by Will my right to the succession of this [the English] crown to the king, your master, on condition that he take me entirely into his protection from now on, and likewise the state and affairs of this country. For the discharge of my own conscience I could not place this responsibility in the hands of a prince more zealous in our religion, or one more capable in every respect to re-establish it in this country, as the best interests of all Christendom require."¹

In conclusion, the queen asked to keep her letter secret, for if the heretics in France learned of it, it would cause the loss of her dowry, due her as the widow of the French king (Francis II), and would bring about a complete breach with her son in Scotland. The extreme danger to which Mary Stuart exposed herself by sending the letter and to which she refers in it, made some historians doubt its authenticity. But whether a fake or not, the important thing was how the Spanish Crown reacted to it. Mendoza hastened to inform Philip of Mary Stuart's letters, and recommended resolute action in her favour.

And Philip II cast away all doubts. On July 18, he wrote to Don Mendoza: "I was happy to receive the copy of the letter written to you by the Queen of Scotland, along with your own of June 26. She has certainly risen a great deal in my estimation as a result of what she says there, and has increased the devotion which I have always felt for her interests—not so much because of what she says in my favour

¹ De Lamar Jensen, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

(though I am very grateful for that too), but because she subordinates her love for her son, which might be expected to lead her astray, for the service of our Lord, the common good of Christendom, and that of England. You may write and tell her all this from me and also assure her that if she perseveres in the path she has rightly chosen, I hope that God will bless her by granting her rightful possessions. You will add that I shall be very pleased to undertake the protection of her person and interests, as she requests. Be careful to keep this matter secret, in accordance with her wishes.”¹

Philip also agreed to grant Mary 12,000 escudos. A précis of Philip's letter was forwarded to the Queen of Scots through Morgan, consequently through the kind services of Gifford and company. In July 1586, an English Catholic priest named Ballard called on Don Mendoza and informed him of a plan to assassinate Elizabeth and restore Catholicism in England. Ballard, who wanted to know whether the Catholic conspirators could count on Spanish aid, was a Catholic fanatic and not a mercenary agent like some of his closest accomplices. On that day, July 26, initiated in the conspirators' plans, Mary Stuart wrote another letter to Don Mendoza:

“It has given me singular contentment to see how the Catholic King [of Spain—*Y.Ch.*], my good brother, is beginning to counteract the plots and attempts of the queen of England against him, not just because of the good I hope to receive from it, but principally for the maintenance of his own reputation in Christendom, for which I feel particular concern.”²

Mary wrote further that, having learned of Philip II's intentions, she no longer despaired because the situation was changing radically. True, for Mary this culminated in the exposure of her part in the Babington plot (which, basically, had been a police set-up), followed by a tribunal and her execution. Ten days after Mary was beheaded, Mendoza wrote, alternating signs of grief with obvious signs of satisfaction: “As

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.

² *Ibid.*, p. 86.

God has so willed, for His ends, that these accursed people should against all reason commit such an act as this, it is evidently His design to deliver these two kingdoms [England and Scotland] into Your Majesty's hands."¹

By that time, Philip had already received Mary's letter in which she denied the right of succession to her son James, and appointed the Spanish king her successor. In addition, Philip II's claim could be backed by his rights as husband of Queen Mary Tudor, who had died nearly three decades before.

Whereas the Babington plot, which had played into the hands not only of the English but also, in a certain sense, the Spanish government, had been fabricated by Walsingham's agents, the other conspiracies were unquestionably authentic, their threads leading to the Spanish embassy and the Jesuit seminaries in Belgium and Italy where English Catholic emigrants were receiving their education. The plots did not cease until the beginning of the 17th century.

While Mary Stuart and Philip II were incarnations of the ambient conflict, the activity of Don Bernardino de Mendoza was just as distinctly a sample of the Catholic camp's secret diplomacy. Spanish ambassador to England (in the early half of the 1580s) and organiser of plots, after the failure of one of which he had had to leave London, Mendoza engaged with equal zeal in fanning the religious wars in France. He was the backstage organiser of the French Catholic League. His agents or those of Father Robert Parsons, head of the English Jesuits, and of their colleagues, were active in Amsterdam and Copenhagen, Stockholm and Warsaw, and wherever else the Counter-Reformation was weaving its web.

Germany again forged into the centre of the ambient conflict, especially as the Counter-Reformation's victory in other countries became less and less likely. Ferdinand (1558-1564) and Maximilian II (1564-1576), the successors of Emperor Charles V, tried to maintain the religious peace of Augsburg,

¹ David Howarth, *The Voyage of the Armada. The Spanish Story*, The Viking Press, New York, 1981, p. 38.

holding this as essential for the maintenance of the "tranquillity" which was so all-important in face of the Turkish threat.

The specific feature of the situation was that alongside the rising influence of the Protestant principalities in Northern Germany, the Reformation was quickly spreading in the hereditary possessions of the Hapsburgs, especially in Bohemia and that part of Hungary which was still in their hands. Heresy had thus spread to lands on which the Austrian Hapsburgs had counted to buttress the power of the German empire. This prompted the court in Vienna to try and maintain a certain degree of religious toleration in its own possessions, so as to use their resources in promoting the interests of the Counter-Reformation in Germany and the rest of Europe.

The Protestant "contagion" spread even to the imperial house. Emperor Maximilian II was seriously gravitating towards the Reformation. In his younger years, when still heir to the throne, he had read the theological works of the Lutherans and had corresponded with the Duke of Württemberg and other Protestant princes. He had Lutherans among his intimates, and even toyed with the idea of abdicating and moving to the possessions of the Protestant Elector of the Palatinate (part of Rhenish Germany) Frederick III, if the latter agreed to offer him asylum. Not until 1561 did he take an oath to live and die within the fold of the Catholic Church. To be sure, when his time to die came in 1576, he turned down the extreme unction—a monstrous fact in the view of Catholics. "The miserable man," the Spanish ambassador in Vienna wrote, "died as he had lived."¹

The policy of the Austrian Hapsburgs met with obvious disapproval in Madrid and created serious differences with Rome. It looked nothing less than disastrous to the camp of militant Catholicism, especially the Jesuits. Trying feverishly to extend their influence, setting up seminaries and colleges wherever they could, and flooding Germany with propaganda litera-

¹ Philippe Erlanger, *Rodolphe II de Habsbourg...*, pp. 41, 72.

ture, the Jesuits followed with alarm the successes that Protestantism was scoring in the Rhenish provinces, and even in Bavaria and Austria, which were considered buttresses of the Catholic Church. The enthronement of Emperor Rudolf II (1576-1612) enabled the Jesuits to gradually renew the policy of the Austrian Hapsburgs to suppressing and combating the Reformation. The disputes between German princes, previously of purely local significance, were now regarded through the prism of the ambient conflict, while the conversion to Protestantism or, reversely, the return to Catholicism of any of the monarchs, was qualified as a breach of the balance of power between the two camps.

In 1582, the Archbishop of Cologne declared himself a Calvinist. His joining the Protestant electors gave them an edge in electing the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Besides, Cologne's siding with the Reformation changed still more the balance of power in Northern Germany, which adjoined the Northern Netherlands, at the height of the latter's fight against Spain. The Pope and the emperor announced the deposition of the archbishop. Neither did he win the support of the other Protestant princes. The archbishopric of Cologne was over-run by Spanish troops, who lunged into it from the Southern Netherlands. Thus, in the 1580s, a considerable portion of Northwest Germany was reconverted to Catholicism.

One More Onslaught

At the end of the 16th century, as Garrett Mattingley, a well-known historian, wrote (with some exaggeration), "European diplomatic contacts were interrupted everywhere except between ideological allies".¹

In 1580, Philip II made a gain which, so it seemed, would greatly augment his material resources in the two ambient conflicts—that against Protestantism and

¹ Garrett Mattingley, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1955, p. 205.

that against Islam. After the death of the childless king of Portugal, Philip II presented his dynastic claim to the vacant throne backed by an army under the Duke of Alva. The advance of the Spanish soldiers was paved beforehand by golden doubloons which Philip II's agents handed out to prominent members of the Portuguese nobility and clergy. As a result, Philip II annexed the country, where anti-Spanish (more precisely, anti-Castile) sentiments ran high, and, indeed, seized control over the rich Portuguese colonial empire which included Brazil, islands in the Atlantic Ocean, and trading factories in Africa and the Indian Peninsula, as well as the Spice Islands (the Moluccas) in Southeast Asia. Unlike Spain, where trade with the New World was controlled by the merchant corporation, in Portugal's case it was a monopoly of the Crown.

After the annexation, therefore, the profits from trading with the Portuguese possessions at once augmented the revenue of the Spanish treasury. The silver extracted in the Spanish overseas possessions in Mexico and Peru paid for the spices and other Asiatic goods that were resold at enormous profit in European markets, while the African slaves transported from the Portuguese colonies to the silver mines and plantations of the New World, increased the revenue still more enormously. The Portuguese ships, too, were a welcome addition to the already huge merchant fleet and navy of Spain. Spain's colonial and trading monopoly seemed solid enough to stand through the ages, while Lisbon and the other Portuguese ports became the finest bases that Spain had for the fleets that set out to fight heretic England and various other opponents of Philip II's universal empire. By the 1580s, the greater flow of bullion from the New World made the sealanes across the Atlantic still more important. In a certain sense, indeed, Philip II's intervention against the Netherlands and England was a struggle for the Atlantic between the Counter-Reformation and Protestantism.

The Catholic attacks spurred the younger generation of Elizabethans, the generation of William Shakespeare, towards uncompromising war against Spain,

which would yield them honour and profit (as attested in a special study by Anthony Esler published in 1966).¹

The ten years after Mary Stuart's execution in 1587 were a time when Philip II endeavoured to resolve the ambient conflict in favour of the Catholic camp by a massive onslaught. The usually slow Philip now began to hurry. To be sure, Mary's dramatic death dwarfed the chances of a successful Catholic uprising. Few English Catholics were inclined to risk their lives for Mary's Calvinist son James, king of Scotland, and still less for the Spanish king. The "English affair", as the Jesuits named the objective of converting England back to Catholicism, could no longer be accomplished other than by war. Yet, from the point of view of the Catholic world, Philip II held dynastic rights to the English throne, and should therefore tackle the matter for his own sake, not for that of anyone else. Indeed, Philip II could present his own claim to the throne or that of any other member of his family. (His claim, as I have already said, was based on Mary Tudor's will and on the fact that Philip had been her husband.)

All the resources of Spain, which had been squandered for decades to pay its rulers' policy of conquest that formed groundwork for the plans of the Counter-Reformation, were now mobilised for the capture of England—an enormous navy was gathered consisting of 130 warships with 2,500 guns and 27,000 soldiers and sailors. The undertaking was described as a crusade. Three hundred guns saluted the gorgeous procession that delivered a banner consecrated by the Pope of Rome aboard the *San Martin*, the flagship. As stated in a report drawn up at the king's command by Pedro de Pax Salas, *La Felicissima Armada*, published in Lisbon in 1588, the great navy would "serve God, and returne unto his church a great many contrite souls that are oppressed by the heretics" (quoted from the *Collected Works* of Karl Marx and Frederick

¹ Anthony Esler, *The Aspiring Mind of the Elizabethan Younger Generation*, Duke University Press, Durham, N.C., 1966.

Engels). On May 29, 1588, the Invincible Armada raised sail for its destination. It was assumed that near the shores of the Southern Netherlands, it would take aboard the army of the Spanish viceroy, the Duke of Parma, and would then head for English shores.

As recently as 1968, a novel *Pavane*, by K. Roberts, appeared in London, in whose prologue we read:

“On a warm July evening of the year 1588, in the royal palace of Greenwich, London, a woman lay dying, an assassin’s bullets lodged in abdomen and chest. Her face was lined, her teeth blackened, and death lent her no dignity; but her last breath started echoes that ran out to shake a hemisphere. For the Faery Queen, Elizabeth the First, paramount ruler of England, was no more.”

This imaginary assassination of Elizabeth by a Catholic agent (in actual fact she died 15 years later), described by the novelist, was well within the realm of the possible, for plots and attempts of Elizabeth’s life occurred in rapid succession. But what followed the “assassination of Elizabeth” in the novel? To begin with, a slaughter of Catholics in all parts of the country, with the latter taking up arms in their turn; then followed a landing of Spanish veteran regiments from the ships of the Armada; Philip II was proclaimed king of England, while in France the Catholic League conquered, and the united forces of Spain, England and France crushed all resistance in the Netherlands.

I will not go on reproducing the course of events created by a writer’s imagination, but it does to some extent show how much was at stake in the plots brewed against Elizabeth (though her forcible elimination, I am sure, could not have brought about so radical a change in the balance of power and so total a victory for the Catholic camp).

The other point to be remembered, however, is that the Armada was, by itself, anything but an insane and doomed undertaking. Historians hold that it had a good enough chance of landing Spanish troops in England and that the armed forces at the disposal of the English government could hardly have prevent-

ed the Duke of Parma from capturing London. That would not have meant conquest of the whole country, but might have compelled Elizabeth to conclude a peace that would for a long time have struck England off the list of the Catholic camp's opponents.

We find a hardened opinion in history books that the Armada had been poorly fitted out, and that its commander, Duke of Medina-Sidonia, Alonso Perez de Guzman, appointed at the last moment, may have been an adroit courtier but was a poor admiral. This is wholly inaccurate. The man was in fact a cold-blooded and industrious commander whose crews had been well trained. The ships of the Armada were no larger in size than the English, therefore no more unwieldy though they carried fewer guns. True, the English were better skilled at manoeuvering. They abandoned the medieval linear tactics in favour of sudden attacks on Spanish bases in Cadiz and the Cape of Saint Vincent. All the same, the Armada had almost attained its strategic aim.

On reaching the English Channel at the end of July, it came under the attack of English ships, whose guns were of longer range, and was assailed by English fireships, that is, vessels loaded with combustibles and explosives which were used to set fire to the enemy fleet. The Armada suffered heavy losses, and its officers were more preoccupied with the thought of saving the warships that were still afloat rather than of conquering England. A military council decided to avoid an engagement with the English navy, and to sail due north, rounding the British Isles and returning to Spain. Unfavourable winds, treacherous banks and rocks, a shortage of potable water and food completed what the English shells had begun. All in all, just 44 warships returned to Spain.

The destruction of the Armada was a big moral victory for England, but did not, as historians once thought, undermine Spanish military power. On the contrary, through the feverish efforts of the Spanish government, it had even increased. And besides, Madrid was fitting out new armadas. The first of these, which raised sail in October 1596, ran into a destructive storm in the Bay of Biscay. The following year

one more attempt was made, and once again a storm dispersed the ships in the vicinity of the English shore. Certainly, these undertakings were moved on a reckless, adventurist spirit. No longer could the Spanish count on defeating the English navy. Their designs were concentrated on taking England by surprise while the bulk of the English navy was far away from home shores, near the Azores in fact, preying on Spanish transports laden with gold and silver from the New World.

By that time, the English were obviously superior on the seas. In June 1596, in fact, English and Dutch raiders entered Cadiz harbour, captured warships and merchantmen there and various other booty, set fire to the city's fortifications and to streets adjoining the harbour, and departed without encountering serious resistance. England, where new, bourgeois-type social relations were burgeoning quickly, proved capable of fitting out a better navy than Spain's, though the latter had the resources of its boundless empire at its disposal.

The Barricades of Henry Guise and the Mass of Henry of Navarre

It would be a mistake to identify the party of the Huguenots with the progressive camp in society. Along with those who were bearers of new social relations, the Huguenots included a considerable number of feudal nobles, especially in the south and south-east of France, who pursued separatist aims imperiling the country's unity. In these circumstances, the Politiques seemed to best reflect the interests of the state. And, consequently, Catherine de Médicis, organiser of the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre, too, reflected them whenever, albeit for dynastic purposes, she followed their programme.

For more than 20 years since the fateful St Bartholomew's Day, the Politiques did not cease their attempts to forge a compromise inside the country and thereby take France out of the ambient conflict. In 1575, they managed to set up an administration at

Languedoc in the south of France which promised religious toleration. In 1576, they secured the publication by King Henry III of the Estates of Blois, which allowed Huguenots to practise their religion everywhere excluding Paris. True, these Estates were never properly observed, and in 1585 the king published a new edict renouncing the principle of religious toleration. Gaspard de Saulx, Seigneur de Tavannes, marshal of France, a member of the Catholic party, described the Politiques sarcastically as people who would rather have peace without God than war for the sake of God. And the only motivation of the Catholic League, represented in Paris by a temporary and tenuous alliance of the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, and the commoners, was struggle against heresy. The Leaguers, who represented the reactionary camp and trod in the footsteps of their mentors, the Jesuits, tried to use the foremost ideas of the era, those of combating tyranny and of the right of electing the ruler, in their own interests. (Some of the League's ideologues even went so far as to advocate democratic ideas.)¹ True, all this applied only in relation to the heretic king. The ideas of democracy were a tribute to the sentiments of a large segment of the bourgeoisie and the commoners of Paris and other cities, who had joined the League, but often employed the rhetoric of the Counter-Reformation to express their social demands.

The king's party, for its part, could maintain that the Leaguers with their satanical ideas of assassinating royalty, were selling France down the river to the Spanish. It was quite true, too, that the leaders of the Catholic League were increasingly becoming a pawn of Spanish politics. Forever short of money, the Duke of Guise was ready to exchange his services for

¹ Frederic J. Baumgartner, *Radical Reactionaries: the Political Thought of the French Catholic League*, Librairie Droz, Geneva, 1975, pp. 155f, 127f, 183f, 215f, 241-242. The League's ideologues, as already noted above, had borrowed considerably from Huguenot authors. But the Leaguers' ideas, in turn, visibly influenced the political thinking of the Huguenots, and even that of the English Puritans (*ibid.*, pp. 241-242).

Spanish gold. From the end of 1581 on, Henry Guise figured as Hercules in Philip II's secret correspondence, and from April 1584 as Mucio. Guise was a systematic recipient of Spanish subsidies from not later than September 1582.¹

Continuous secret contacts, personal and written, were maintained by the enterprising Duchess of Montpensier, Guise's sister known as *la furie de la ligue*, with the Spanish king's ambassador, Don Mendoza. Spanish diplomacy sought to split the influential party of Politiques and win its most prominent leaders to its side. And ever since 1582, Philip II made special efforts to win for the League the allegiance of the semi-independent governor of Languedoc Province, Henry Montmorency. He was granted a considerable subsidy, and was being tempted by the prospect of a lasting alliance of the Guises and the Montmorencys to be sealed by the marriage of their children. In the long run, these efforts proved in vain, with Montmorency gradually moving into the camp of the League's adversaries.

Spanish diplomacy also sought to win the support of the Society of Jesus. True, there is hardly any direct evidence of Don Mendoza's contacts with the Jesuits in extant documents, and not only because such information was not usually confided to paper. The Jesuits, who were the moving spirits and preachers of the League, acted at their own discretion and risk, with no direct instructions from Claudio Aquaviva, general of the Society, and his cohorts, who pretended to know nothing of the vigorous activity of some of their subordinates in France.

The leaders of the Society of Jesus, who had made two-facedness a principle of behaviour, did not wish to stake everything on one card. Among the Jesuits who were agents of the Guises, the Lorrainian Claude Matthieu, nicknamed the League's courier, was especially zealous. His successor Odon Pigenat operated in close contact with Don Mendoza. Jesuit preacher Jacques Commolet, nicknamed the League's

¹ Jacques Vivent, *La tragédie de Blois. Le roi de France et le duc de Guise*, Hachette, Paris, 1946, pp. 194-195.

orator, advocated transfer of the French throne to the Spanish Hapsburgs. The other friars acted in a similar vein.¹

On December 31, 1584, Philip II concluded the secret Treaty of Joinville with the Guises and the Catholic League under which the two sides agreed to work for the recognition of the elderly Cardinal Bourbon, successor to the throne, in place of the heretic Henry of Navarre, and also for the final eradication of Protestant heresy in France. The Spanish king promised the League a monthly subsidy of 50,000 écus² and military backing, in return for which the Guises promised to help put French Navarre and a number of other localities and cities under Spanish rule. By making common cause with the League, Philip II hoped to achieve what Charles V had failed to achieve, and to turn France into a vassal and instrument of the Spanish court's hegemonic policy. The Guises, who had dynastic ties with the Scottish royal house, were also thereby giving Philip II a free hand in the fight against Elizabeth. For all of this the Guises received more than a million écus from the Spanish king from 1585 to 1588.

Henry III, frightened by the rapid growth of the League's influence, ordered his Swiss and German mercenaries to guard the eastern districts of France. But the Guises managed to prevent his command from being carried out. The king withdrew to the Louvre under the protection of his new 45-man bodyguard of chiefly Gascogne noblemen. The reader is probably acquainted with this fact, above all from Alexander Dumas's celebrated novel, *The Forty-Five*. In the spring and early summer of 1585, Catherine de Médicis tried to reach an agreement with the League's leaders (Don Mendoza was kept informed of the negotiations by François Miron, his secret agent, who was the king's physician). On July 7, Catherine and the Leaguers signed a treaty in Nemours, ratified the very next day by Henry III. It stood for the crown's

¹ De Lamar Jensen, op. cit., pp. 111-113.

² N. M. Sutherland, *The Huguenot Struggle for Recognition*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1980, p. 278.

complete acceptance of the League's demands. It provided for the repeal of all preceding royal edicts containing any concessions to the Huguenots and forbade the practice in France of any other religion but Catholicism. All Protestant clergymen were to leave the country within a month, while "heretics" were forbidden to hold public office. Within six months, all the king's subjects were to declare their allegiance to Catholicism or be banished from the country. The captured Huguenot strongholds, including Verdun, were to be turned over to the Guises and their followers.

What prove could the king of Spain want? Henry III sought to obtain Philip II's approval of the treaty. Speaking to Don Mendoza, he expressed the hope that it would bring the two kingdoms closer together since it was "such a holy and just enterprise". In actual fact, however, this was not so.

The treaty of Nemours contained Guise's promise, though vested in cautious and inconclusive language, to tear up agreements concluded with foreigners. Furthermore, the Duke of Guise had not informed the Spanish court beforehand of his intention to conclude the treaty, and had not asked for its approval. Don Mendoza sent a copy of the treaty to Philip with the comment that "the Leaguers are motivated more by their own interests than they are by religious zeal".¹

Philip even feared that Henry III and the Guises would, upon jointly defeating Henry of Navarre, become too strong vis-à-vis Spain. In other words, in his eyes the final defeat of Huguenot heresy in France worked against his dream of establishing a universal monarch with its centre in Madrid. It was probably this very circumstance that was exploited by the only just elected Pope Sixtus V, who hated and feared the Spaniards. Though he did not trust the Guises either, the Pope resolutely approved the treaty, and issued a bull in September 1585, excommunicating the Huguenot leaders Henry of Navarre and the Prince of Condé as persons who had once more, after repent-

¹ De Lamar Jensen, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

ing, espoused heresy. They were denied the right of succession to the throne.

By the end of the 1580s, it appeared that Henry III had completely lost the wish of ruling. Surrounded by favourites and packs of hunting dogs, he spent his time in amusements and in indulging his vices, of which the populace of Paris was informed in detail by his enemies. So, to strengthen his position, Henry III decided to lean on Henry of Navarre, leader of the Huguenots who was successor to the throne after the death of the king's youngest brother.

Henry III had an agent in the League's leadership, a certain Nicolas Poulain, who was one of the most important officials of Paris with access to all the secrets of the Guises. When the League began preparing for an uprising in March 1588, Poulain lost no time to let the king know about it. But Henry refused to believe him, and more so because one of his intimates managed to convince him that Poulain was a spy in the employ of Henry of Navarre planting false information in order to divide the Crown and the League.

Earlier in 1588, the League handed Henry III a kind of 11-point ultimatum adopted at Nancy. It enumerated the terms on which it agreed to maintain the treaty of Nemours, that is, their alliance with the king. The Leaguers insisted that the king should more conclusively support their aim, that of eradicating heresy; that he should remove from the Royal Council persons who protected Huguenots; that he should publish and put into effect throughout France the resolutions of the Council of Trent; institute the Inquisition in Paris and all provincial centres, impose a special tax amounting to one-third of their property on persons who had at any time since 1560 espoused Protestantism, and use the resources thus gained to wage war against enemies of the faith. The Leaguers demanded, too, that the property of persons who refused to renounce their heresy should be confiscated and put on sale, and that all prisoners of war who did not wish to return to the Catholic fold should be put to death, and so on. The Leaguers' actions were directed backstage by the Spanish ambassador. Preparing for the League's uprising, Don Men-

doza tried to have it facilitate the victory of the Invincible Armada, which was to sail on April 14, 1588. He wrote to Philip II:

"If the project in question is carried out as planned, the king [Henry III] will have his hands so full that it will be impossible for him, either by words or by deeds, to give aid to the English queen. It is for this reason that I have thought it wise to delay the execution of the project until the moment Your Majesty's Armada is on the point of departure."¹

The Armada set out on May 9, and a few days later stormy events erupted in the French capital. On May 15, barricades were erected all over Paris, for the first time in its history. Later, Parisians would fight on the barricades many a time under the banners of revolution. But that would come later. On the Day of the Barricades in 1588, the populace of Paris rose against King Henry III, being incited by the Jesuits and the chiefs of the Catholic League to kill all Huguenots. (True, some Western historians consider the Day of the Barricades an abortive revolution along the lines of the Great French Revolution of the late 18th century.²) Crowds of Parisians quickly overpowered the king's soldiers. The Swiss of the royal guard raised their hands in surrender, holding prayer beads between their fingers to show they belonged to the Catholic Church: that was the only way they could escape certain death.

The king begged Henry Guise, idol of the Leaguers, to quiet the populace with all possible concessions, and while the duke rode from street to street to pacify a mutiny he had himself incited, Henry III slipped out of Paris unnoticed through the only as yet unlocked city gate.

Henry III did not want to be a pawn in Guise's hands, though even having fled to Blois, he had had initially to approve everything the League did to root out Protestantism. But Henry's flight from Paris wrecked the Leaguers' plans, and badly alarmed

¹ De Lamar Jensen, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

² Ralph Roeder, *Catherine de Medici and the Lost Revolution*, The Viking Press, New York, 1937.

Philip II and his governor in the Netherlands, Alexander of Parma. Pope Sixtus V, on the other hand, was displeased with the French king's lack of courage. In his opinion, Henry III should have summoned the Duke of Guise, "cut his head off, and thrown it into the street".¹ Whereupon, the Pope said, the towns-men would have been appeased.

Whatever the case, if Henry III had needed prompting, in the long run he did not forget Rome's advice. True, at first he acted with extreme caution. Well informed by his spies, he knew the Spanish ambassador's part in the mutiny of the League, that ally of Philip's. Henry ordered the French ambassador in Madrid to lodge a written protest against Mendoza's participating in the plotting of the Paris events. Philip II, however, did not censure Don Mendoza. Far from it. He praised Mendoza's zeal in defending the interests of the Catholic Church, and reprimanded the French king for his lack of the same devotion to the holy cause. In substance, this was a formal claim to the right of interfering in France's internal affairs on the excuse of protecting the interests of the Counter-Reformation. And though he saw this, Henry III did not risk an open break with Spain.

The Day of the Barricades caused a realignment of political forces in France. The Politiques came out much more outspokenly and sharply against the League, for they felt its growing menace to France's unity and independence. The king's army and the Huguenot troops that joined it laid siege to Paris. Henry III summoned the Duke of Guise to Blois where he had his bodyguards kill him. In the duke's pocket was found a letter to Philip II. "To fight the civil war in France," it said, "will take 700,000 livres each month."² The Leaguers responded by sending friar Jacques Clément, a religious fanatic, to plead for an audience with King Henry III. During that audience, he pulled out a dagger and stabbed the king, who died on the following day, August 2, 1589.

¹ De Lamar Jensen, *op. cit.*, pp. 144-145.

² Philippe Erlanger, *Richelieu l'ambitieux*, Librairie académique Perrin, Paris, 1967, p. 18.

An informed contemporary and witness notes that Catholic priests who sided with the League raised a howl that Clément, who had endured death "to deliver France from the tyranny of that dog Henry Valois", was a true martyr.¹ They described the assassination as "a grand godly deed, a miracle, an exploit of pure divine providence". The same contemporary cites a long list of propaganda pamphlets hastily published to mark the event. The abundance of such pamphlets is hardly matched by the conservative political propaganda of later times.

The legitimate successor of the last member of the house of Valois was Henry Bourbon (of Navarre). "We would rather die a thousand deaths," was the sentiment voiced by a large segment of the French Catholic nobility to express their disgust with the prospect of having a Huguenot king.²

Rome received word of Henry III's death with much grief, which derived not only from fears that the French throne would fall to the heretic Henry of Navarre, but also, and mainly, from fears that the Leaguers might hand France over to Philip II.

The energetic Sixtus V, a former shepherd whose papacy began in 1585, had a strong dislike for the Spanish king. He could not bear spending money, not even for so essential a cause dear to his heart as rooting out bandits in Rome. The rewards he promised for their capture were paid by their relatives or countrymen. Less still did Sixtus wish to subsidise the "English affair" of Philip II. He lost sleep at the very thought of this, the Spanish ambassador reported, and broke the crockery and cursed his servants. At times, Sixtus V publicly declared he would excommunicate Philip II. And after the Spanish Armada raised sail, the Roman pontiff told various foreign ambassadors it would never succeed. When word arrived of its defeat, the Pope instantly declared he would not pay the million escudos he had promised Philip II. The pretext was that his commitment was

¹ *Journal de l'Estoile pour le règne de Henry IV*, Vol. I, Gallimard, Paris, 1948, pp. 19, 20.

² Henry Hauser, op. cit., pp. 150-151.

valid only if Spanish troops landed on English soil.

"I find him," reported the Spanish ambassador Enrique de Guzmán, count of Olivares, on September 26, 1588, "very lukewarm in his tokens of satisfaction whenever good news comes from Spain and not much affected by bad news from that quarter. Envy of Your Majesty's greatness and his horror at parting with money act more powerfully upon his nature than do the welfare of the church and zeal to see the annihilation of heresy in the world."¹

But not money determined the attitude of Sixtus V. It was rather the Pope's envy of the power wielded by the Hapsburgs and fear that this power would grow.

Did the papacy want to keep France an active participant in the confrontation against Protestantism? Speaking of France itself, it was certainly in the Pope's interests that it should remain Catholic, no more. If, however, France's participation in the Counter-Reformation on an all-European scale should in any way further the great-power plans of the Hapsburgs, this would change matters most radically. Like all the other European royalty, the Pope had a stake in preventing Spanish hegemony. Small wonder that he was a zealous advocate of the balance of power doctrine. "Great Christian princes," he told the ambassador of Venice, "require a counterpoise; for if one prevails the others run the risk of giving in on many things which he may ask for."

True, initially Sixtus gave in to Spanish pressure and, to back up the Catholic party in France, reaffirmed the excommunication of the Huguenot leader, Henry of Navarre, declaring him a heretic and stripping him of rights to the French throne. Soon thereafter, however, the fact that Henry of Navarre was a bitter enemy of Philip who hoped to seize control of the whole of France, superseded all other considerations in the Pope's attitude. The pontiff began counting on Henry's return (a second time!) to the Catholic fold. (Philip II, on the other hand, was dis-

¹ John Lynch, *Spain Under the Hapsburgs*, Vol. I, *Empire and Absolutism, 1516-1598*, op. cit. p. 283.

pleased with the prospect, and announced beforehand that any such step of Henry's would be pure pretence and that Spain would on all accounts resist his accession to the throne of France.)

The Pope granted the Duke of Luxembourg, representing the French Catholics who sided with Henry of Navarre, a gracious reception in Rome. The Spanish king's ambassador, Count of Olivares, protested vehemently, but Sixtus V responded by calling Olivares a "criminal, scandalous creature" at one of his audiences.

The Pope went to the length of threatening Philip II. "Does His Majesty venture to lay down the law for us?" he asked, and warned: "Let him take care; we shall excommunicate him and rouse the peoples of Spain and his other states against him."¹

Olivares had had to leave Rome. But Sixtus V, too, realised that he had gone too far. Especially so when the new Spanish ambassador picked up where former had left off. Philip II wrote to the pontiff: "Nothing has surprised me more than to see Your Holiness, after an act inspired by God, leaving time to the heretics to take root in France, without even ordering that the Catholic partisans of the Béarnais [the man from Bearn, Henry of Navarre] should separate from his cause. The Church is on the eve of losing one of its members; Christendom is on the point of being set on fire by the united heretics; Italy runs the greatest danger, and in the presence of the enemy we look on and we temporise!"

Referring to his faithful allegiance to the Pope, the Spanish king added: "But the greater my devotion the less I shall consent to your failing in your duty towards God and towards the Church, who have given you the means of acting; and, at the risk of being importunate to Your Holiness and displeasing you, I shall insist on your setting to the task."

The Pope could not afford to forget that there were Spanish troops in Milan and Naples. He had no choice, therefore, but to ask the Duke of Luxem-

¹ Félix Rocquain, *La France et Rome pendant les guerres de religion*, Edouard Champion, Paris, 1924, p. 413.

bourg to leave Rome, and concluded an alliance with Spain in July 1590.

A month later, on August 27, Pope Sixtus V passed away. It was rumoured that he had been poisoned by the Jesuits, who were displeased by his lack of zeal in pursuing the Counter-Reformation. The same rumours said the Jesuits had been encouraged by agents of Philip II.

“Those Spaniards are killing me,” the Pope said a fortnight before his death to the ambassador of Venice. Was he referring to just his verbal battles with the Spanish ambassador?

After the death of Sixtus V, Rome’s policy veered again in Spain’s favour. Philip II decided to take a hand in the election of the new Pope, and to do so availed himself of the fact that many of the cardinals had estates in the Spanish possessions of Italy or were receiving a pension from Madrid. Three times running, Spanish diplomacy succeeded in having its choice: after the shortlived papacy of Urban VII, the office passed to Gregory XIV, who ordered the French cardinals to break off relations with the heretic king and called on the French nobility to withhold their support of Henry IV. More, Landriano was sent as papal nuncio to France to excommunicate Henry IV, along with a small army under the command of Gregory XIV’s nephew to back up the Catholic League.

For his part, Henry IV demonstratively announced his intention of supporting Catholicism, while adding that the Pope was acting as an ally of the enemies of France—Philip II, and the dukes of Savoy and Lorraine, who wished to dismember the country.

But after the demise of Gregory XIV, and especially after that of his successor Pope Innocent IX (in 1591 and 1592 respectively), Rome’s policy changed again. At the conclave of January 1592, the opponents of the Spanish nomination took the upper hand. The new Pope, Clement VIII, granted absolution in September 1595 to Henry of Navarre, who had become Henry IV, the king of France, and recognised him as the country’s lawful head. Replying to the Spanish ambassador, who pleaded against this, Pope Clement VIII observed that God rejoiced more

over one repentant sinner than over a thousand devotees. Contrary to Philip II's wishes, Rome was obviously reluctant to identify Spanish interests with those of the papacy and the Catholic Church. The Spanish governor of Milan wrote to Philip II in the autumn of 1597 that the Pope displayed "little satisfaction over the grandeur of your states", and was "naturally inclined in favour of France, for he loved the Béarnais as his own son".¹

The only way the Leaguers could prevail in France was for the Spanish troops stationed in Flanders to intervene there. Philip II, suspicious of everybody, did not fully trust his commander in the Netherlands, Alessandro Farnese, the Duke of Parma, who, however, had regained control over half the rebel provinces. Though Elizabeth I had more than once suggested that Farnese should proclaim himself independent ruler of the Netherlands, she encountered his firm refusal. But the offers as such tended to add to Philip's suspicions, which he often entertained even for less reason.

Alessandro Farnese thought it insane to send an army to the south of France at the height of the war with the Dutch. But on August 4, 1590, Philip sent him a letter, perhaps the most impassioned in the king's enormously protracted correspondence. It was most adamant: "You know what I want. I have opened my heart to you. To satisfy me you must leave for France, and you will see how grateful I shall be."²

In August 1590, the army of the Duke of Parma set out from Flanders in a southerly direction. Paris, which was in the hands of the Catholic League, was beleaguered by Henry IV. The Spanish troops, commanded by the greatest general of that time, compelled Henry to lift the siege. In 1591, the Spanish troops entered Paris: they consisted of 4,000 German and 6,000 Swiss mercenaries. A few thousand Spaniards helped the Leaguers to instal themselves in

¹ Fernand Braudel, *op. cit.*, pp. 1069-1070.

² Edward Grierson, *The Fatal Inheritance. Philip II and the Spanish Netherlands*, Doubleday & Company, New York, 1969, p. 306.

Brittany. They were also on the offensive in Provence, in Dauphiné, Languedoc, and Berry.

The Duke of Parma himself returned in haste to Flanders to prosecute the war against the Dutch states. The Spanish intervention was too inconclusive to determine the outcome of the fighting. (Let us also recall that at that time—1590 to 1592—the reserves at Philip II's disposal were being used to suppress an uprising in Aragon).

Upon retreating from the walls of Paris, Henry IV cut the supply lines to the capital. Especially important in this effort was the fighting for Rouen, besieged by Henry's troops. It took a second invasion from Flanders of the Duke of Parma's forces in March 1592 to prevent the city's surrender. But that was the last of the Spanish successes in France. Already in June, the duke of Parma was compelled to begin a withdrawal. And on the way back to Flanders in December 1592, he died of a fatal wound received in one of the battles.

Spain's actions against the Netherlands, France and Britain turned out to be most closely connected. Philip II was convinced that success or failure in suppressing the Dutch Calvinist "rebels" would affect his policy, even the future of Christendom. Yet it became increasingly clear that victory in Holland was impossible until the Dutch would be denied English and French aid. While this was also impossible until the militant pro-Spanish Catholic party won in France and England. Yet interference in the internal struggles that went on in France and England soon became an aim in itself (rather than a means of defeating the Dutch revolution) or, more precisely, an instrument of establishing Spanish hegemony on the pretext of restoring religious unity, peace and order in the Christian West. And in this political scheme, our old acquaintance Don Mendoza, first ambassador to England and then to France, was probably the most colourful figure.

In Paris, Gomez Suarez, Count of Feria, who replaced Don Mendoza as Spanish ambassador, demanded that the States General (convened in January 1593 and consisting of delegates from territories controlled

by the League) repeal the Salic Law which forbade women to occupy the throne, and declare Philip II's daughter queen of France. Nor did Feria bother to keep it a secret that the Infanta would marry Albert, the archduke of Austria, who was brother and heir apparent of Emperor Rudolph of Hapsburg. This was too much to swallow for even the most dedicated Leaguers. Feria's pretensions encountered swiftly mounting resistance. Neither did his other plan, that of enthroning Duke Charles de Guise and having him marry the Infanta, meet with any approval.

It was all too obvious that Feria's designs were centred on placing France under the mighty Spanish state. And seeing his influence fade away, Feria tried to establish the authority of the Spanish in Paris by force—in vain, as it turned out. Matters reached a point where the Leaguers did not disguise their pleasure over the defeat suffered by the Spanish unit in a clash with the troops of Henry IV.

The Leaguers' ranks began to shrink. Especially after Henry IV returned to the Catholic fold in July 1593. The outcome of the fighting around Rouen settled the question of the Spanish claim to the French throne. It had had a chance only with armed backing, which it was now denied. True, the Spanish would not at first reconcile themselves with their defeat.

After the assassination of Henry III, the Politiques joined Henry of Navarre in ever greater numbers. Some of them were prepared to accept him as king even if he had kept his faith, because they knew he would at any cost end the religious wars. But to win, Henry had had to convert to Catholicism, though, perhaps, he had never spoken the famous phrase, "Paris is worth a Mass". His change of religion, to be sure, changed nothing in the king's ways: people said of him who had once had affairs simultaneously with the mothers-superior of two nunneries, that "he slept with Our Holy Mother the Church, and cuckolded God".

Six months after Henry's conversion to Catholicism, Paris, that chief buttress of the League, opened its gates to the king. Henry's victory was a victory for the Politiques, whose platform he wholeheartedly ac-

cepted. The victory was complete and final, because the religious wars, if they continued, would go counter to the basic interests not only of the peasants and townsmen, who suffered cruelly from the country's economic ruin, but also to those of the bulk of the nobility, frightened by the spectre of another Jacquerie, the 14th-century peasant revolt in Northern France. Maximilien de Béthune, the Duke of Sully (1559-1641), Henry IV's close follower during the religious wars, advised his royal friend to take up Catholicism, while he himself remained a Huguenot. This did not prevent Henry from appointing him minister of finance and to many other high offices.

A Calvinist minister serving a Catholic king was a situation that contradicted the rules and psychology of the ambient conflict. The duke of Sully was an admirer of the *Politiques*, and held that religious toleration was an essential condition for strengthening absolutist monarchy. In the circumstances, all Henry IV had to do was win over the more influential grandes of the Catholic camp by means of concessions and hand-outs. Those who wanted the religious wars to continue, who wanted France to participate in the ambient conflict, those who represented the all-European Counter-Reformation, above all the Jesuits, lost support among the masses (more exactly, their political platform lost support, while they retained much of their personal influence).

On January 17, 1595, France officially declared war on Spain. In the declaration of war, Henry IV accused Philip II of openly assailing the loyalty of the French to their natural princes and sovereign rulers "on the pretext of piety", in order to seize the French crown.¹

In other words, the Spanish king was accused of exploiting the ambient conflict as a screen for capturing foreign possessions. In September 1595, Pope Clement VIII took Henry back into the fold of the Church. The true essence of the Holy League, concealed by Counter-Reformation rhetoric, was becoming ever more plain to faithful Catholics. Hinting at

¹ Fernand Braudel, *op. cit.*, p. 1067.

the Cross of Lorraine, which was the League's symbol, poet Jean Passerat exclaimed:

*Dites moi donc, que signifie
Que les ligueurs ont double croix?
C'est qu'en la ligue on crucifie
Jésus Christ encore une fois.*

The civil war continued for some time still, but the Spanish intervention was encountering most bitter resistance from all sides. Spain's resources barely sufficed to keep control over border areas and maritime regions. And that control, too, was not enduring. In 1596, the Spanish had had to abandon Toulouse and Marseilles. In April of that year, however, they seized Calais in a surprise attack. But Philip proved incapable of using the English Channel port to make war against England.

In 1597, the Spanish captured Amiens, but could hold it for only six months. Shortly before his death, Philip II had no choice but to make peace with France. It had taken him 40 years to realise that he could not win. The Peace of Vervins, signed on May 2, 1598, reaffirmed the border as fixed at Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559.

No few Frenchmen, however, had grown so accustomed to the decades of war at home and abroad in the framework of the ambient conflict that they considered it inevitable and dreaded its ending. Duc d'Angoulême, Charles de Valois, the bastard son of Charles IX, who was author of most interesting memoirs, recalled that in the spring of 1598 he heard loud voices remonstrating against peace. They kept saying that like the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, which had left many people out of work and had given the start to civil wars, the projected peace with Spain would cause the resumption of civil wars. Agrippa d'Aubigné, the poet, on the other hand, hailed the Peace of Vervins in his *Histoire universelle*, describing Henry IV "triumphant and seeing himself without an enemy".¹ A certain contemporary, Bel-

¹ Cited from N. M. Sutherland, op. cit., p. 328.

lièvre by name, maintained admiringly that the Peace of Vervins "was the most advantageous that France had concluded in the past 500 years".¹ But let us not forget that the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis was, at the time it was concluded, considered a major defeat for France. It would be hard to find better proof that both belligerents stood to lose from their participation in the ambient conflict.

Spain remained at war with England for another six years after making peace with France. In 1602, in fact, Ambrogio di Spinola, commander of the navy in the Spanish Netherlands, began preparing for a landing in England. It was his intention to at first capture two harbours, and thereupon bring in troops and the requisite supplies. The plan, however, overlooked the true balance of power on the seas. Before even setting sail, the Spanish fleet was routed by the Dutch navy.

At long last, it began to sink in at the Madrid court that it was time to sue for peace with the detested heretic English queen. From the outset, it was Madrid's intention to make the peace conditional on a declaration of religious toleration vis-à-vis the English Catholics. In so doing, the Spanish government had no intention at all of applying the same toleration in its own possessions. Indeed, a few years later, in 1609, King Philip III, who succeeded to Philip II's throne, expelled the remaining Moriscos (about 500,000) from Spain. As before, Madrid viewed its peace plans in conjunction with the aims it had failed to achieve by military means. Discussing the desirability of a peace with England, for example, the advisers of the Spanish governor of the Southern Netherlands, said: "By means of this peace, one will be able to go freely all over the kingdom and gain supporters there for the eventuality of the death of the Queen (which according to the course of nature can hardly delay much longer) in order to advance our affairs in the best way it can be done." Making peace, they added, would be "the true road to the installation there

¹ Marcel Reinhard, *Henri IV ou la France sauvée*, Le Club du meilleur livre, Paris, 1958, p. 100.

of a prince of the House of Austria [i.e., of the Hapsburgs—Y.Ch.].¹

The opponents of peace, on the other hand, referred to the probability of civil strife in England after Elizabeth's death, and said it would be easier for the Spanish king to openly intervene and present his claims to the British throne if the state of war prevailed. Peace was assessed from the angle of how it would help the war against the Dutch, how great the chances were to win England to Spain's side in the struggle against France, and so on. Some even believed that peace was harmful to Spanish interests since it would improve England's economic situation, whereas Madrid would, as before, continue spending its resources on the war against the Dutch "rebels".²

The waste of resources did proceed swiftly. In 1547-1548 Spain's average annual expenditures on armed operations outside the country amounted to approximately two million florins, whereas the same figure in 1590-1598 was nine million yearly. Researchers estimate that the Spanish Armada alone had cost 30 million florins. Besides, the Spanish treasury spent even more on financing the Catholic League in France. In the 1590s, Spain's military treasury in the Netherlands, which allocated funds for the intervention in France, received 90.7 million florins from Madrid.³ What part of this sum went to France may be judged from data pertaining to the period between August 1590 and May 1591: nearly 4 million florins were received, of which 3 million were spent on the war in France and the remaining less than a million on operations in the Netherlands.⁴

By the time of Philip II's death, the Spanish crown's debt was estimated at nearly 300 million florins, a fantastic sum for that time—and this despite the fact that the king had at his disposal countless

¹ Charles Howard Carter, *The Secret Diplomacy of the Hapsburgs, 1598-1625*, p. 55 ff.

² Geoffrey Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road. 1567-1659*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1972, pp. 184, 287.

³ Ibid., p. 293.

⁴ Geoffrey Parker, *Spain and the Netherlands...*, p. 36.

millions obtained from the sale of bullion shipped in from the American colonies. Even back in 1593, petitioning Philip II on withdrawing Spanish troops from France and the Netherlands, the Castilian corteses added not without sarcasm that this would be the most effective manner of punishing heretics who refused to adopt the holy Catholic faith, "for if they wanted to be damned, let them be".¹

Francisco Gómez de Quevedo y Villegas, a Spanish writer of the early half of the 17th century, who had once been minister of finance and who knew what the intervention in the Netherlands had cost his country, wrote that the execution of the opposition leaders, count of Egmont and count of Hoorn, had set off endless bloodshed. In the wars that had lasted 60 years and more, Spain paid a toll of 2 million lives for the lives of these two men, because the military campaigns and sieges had turned the Netherlands into Europe's common grave.

The Peace of Vervins and the peace concluded with England in 1604 had, it would seem, given the Spanish a free hand in the war against the Netherlands. But all that this boiled down to were a few partial successes which paved the way for an armistice concluded in 1607 and maintained until 1621. As a result of the victorious Revolt of the Netherlands, despite its inconclusive character, one more independent national state came into being. Much more, it was a state of a new type in class terms—a bourgeois state. It also had a new form, that of a bourgeois republic. (The republic of the united provinces was precisely a new type of republic as compared with previously known republics, the medieval city republics and the union of Swiss cantons.)

In the first stage of the conflict, none of the bourgeois-democratic movements in Europe had been able to attain success. This was due not only to the power of Charles V's empire, but also to the fact that feudal reaction flocked to the flag. Also, the progressive camp was still weak and permitted Protestant princes

¹ H. G. Koenigsberger, *The Habsburgs and Europe*, pp. 198-199.

to seize leadership and for their part, to participate in suppressing popular movements.

The situation changed in the second stage of the conflict, when the Catholic camp proved incapable of averting the victory of the Revolt of the Netherlands.

Spain's treaties with France, England and Holland wrote *finis* to the plans of a universal Hapsburg monarchy with its centre in Madrid. The Golden Age of Spain was fading into the past as Holland's star rose in the new 17th century.

Decline and Fall

At the height of the bitter struggle it naturally occurred to the Protestants that they should militarily squash the papacy in its very home. In his *Les Tragiques*, poet Agrippa d'Aubigné wrote:

*Let's attack the Roman legions,
The Italian monsters, and do as
Hannibal did, aflame with ardent courage,
Forcing a passage across the Alps.
Thus I rush ahead, my spirit strong,
Breaking down the doors of the seven
hills,
And destroying that buttress of ignominy
inspiring
Vain terror in the hearts of kings.¹*

But the aim was unrealistic. At no time did it become the political programme of the Protestant camp. In the setting of societies of antagonistic classes, the overall progressive standpoint of the countries opposing the conservative camp clearly did not

¹ Puisqu'il faut s'attaquer aux légions de Rome,
Aux monstres d'Italie, il faudra faire comme
Hannibal, qui, par feux d'aigre humeur arrosez,
Se fendit un passage aux Alpes embrazez. Mon courage
de feu, mon humeur aigre et forte,
Au travers des sept monts fait breche au lieu de porte.
Je brise les rochers et le respect d'erreur
Qui fit douter Caesar d'une vaine terreur.

mean that their military aims were exclusively defensive and confined to protecting their own independence. There were also expansionist aims, pursued by the dominant classes wherever and whenever this was possible. The Dutch, for example, much to the envy of the English, began capturing Spanish, and particularly Portuguese, colonies (which were under Madrid's authority following Portugal's annexation by Spain in 1580) in the Moluccas, India, and the Antilles, and, finally, expelled the Portuguese from Brazil in 1630.

In the 16th century, Protestantism was by and large on the defensive on the international scene. Its adversary was superior materially and in manpower. But this did not mean that ideas of exporting the Reformation were foreign to the Protestant camp. Though it suffered a total setback in this respect. Nowhere in the world was Protestantism extended or asserted by means of armed intervention. In all places, such as the larger part of Germany, the Scandinavian countries, England, and Scotland, the Reformation took root as a result of internal developments, and its shape was the result of the correlation of class forces, of the political struggle inside the country.

That is why diverse currents of the reformed Church—from Calvinism to Anglicanism, which, fairly enough, was considered as standing halfway between Catholicism and the radical trends of the Reformation—triumphed in different countries. The status of the Huguenots in France, too, was a compromise despite the support they received from the Protestant states. Although Henry IV, a former leader of the Huguenots, became king of France, all they secured was a guaranteed minority right rather than equality with the Catholics. Their subsequent decline in the 17th century was due to the desertion from their camp of the nobility.

Even in the Netherlands, the division into seven northern Calvinist provinces which formed the Dutch republic, and the ten southern Catholic provinces, was in no way exclusively due to the successful military operations of the duke of Parma, who re-

gained for Philip II the already nearly lost Flanders in 1584 and 1585. These successes, indeed, were possible due to the class struggle in Flanders, the victories of the Catholics, the keen competition between the bourgeoisie of the northern and southern parts of the Netherlands. A special role was played by the northern provinces' lack of interest in liberating the southern towns, which were their trading rivals. That is why the Dutch had only one concern, that of stabilising the front line along the boundary between the southern and central provinces of the Netherlands. And in this they were successful.

As a result of the ambient conflict, it was possible to partly suppress Protestantism in the possessions of the Hapsburgs. Its weak sprouts in Poland, the Italian states, and Spain, were weeded out wholly as a result of internal struggles. By the close of the 16th century, when the religious wars in France ended (which, I might add, coincided with the end of the second stage of the ambient conflict), the winners were countries that succeeded in effectively withdrawing from the ambient conflict, that is, Elizabethan England and the France of Henry IV.

True, French historian Jules Michelet lays the accent on something else. "The consequences of the Peace of Vervins were horrifying," he writes. "With France drawing into its shell everything was left to chance. Europe soon entered a long-drawn-out St Bartholomew's Day known as the Thirty Years War, when people learned to eat the flesh of their like."¹

But for what reason does he think that France's withdrawal from the conflict had made it wider, rather than narrower? The withdrawal of England and France from the conflict did not mean, of course, that, within certain limits, both of them were not again drawn into the conflict. This refers especially to France at the time of the Thirty Years War. Though its involvement was limited and not necessarily on the side of the camp to which the country belonged religiously.

¹ Jules Michelet, *La Ligue et Henri IV*, Chamerot, Paris, 1860, p. 457.

Employing terms used in our times, Philippe Erlanger, whom I have already quoted earlier, wrote that "the Peace of Vervins signed by Henry IV and Philip II did not end what we now call the cold war between the two kingdoms. France continued to secretly aid the enemies of the House of Austria, which, for its part, employed corruption, assassination, and plotting against France."¹

If the term "cold war" is used at all, despite its modern ring, it should be applied not only to Franco-Spanish relations, but also, in the early 17th century, to all of Western and Central Europe.

Here is how French historian A. Dupront described the ideological confrontation of that time:

"Aside from the collision of doctrines, and even the endless controversies and venomous insults, which were as luxuriant as they were obscene, the impregnation of eschatological images evoked in the collective reason of the adversaries the idea of irremediable damnation bordering on inescapable physical extermination. The Roman Church was the Babylonian whore (*Babylonische hur*), the Catholic priests were the priests of Baal (*Baalspfaffen*), and the gloriously reigning Pope was naturally the anti-Christ. This imagery of the Scripture about the last days of the world became habitual among Calvinists in the Rhenish countries of the early 17th century. On the part of the Catholic orthodoxy, too, the picture was no less lurid: the pest, venom, the serpent and certain maledictions, some of them highly malodorous, were common."² All that was left was a fierce heterodoxy and the memory of an age-long struggle.

Either of the camps (and often countries that stood outside the conflict) had a stake in collisions within the other camp. But not just any collisions, for only those that undermined the positions of the

¹ Philippe Erlanger, *Rodolphe II de Habsbourg...*, p. 181.

² A. Dupront, "Unité des chrétiens et unité de l'Europe dans la période moderne", in *XIII Congrès International des sciences historiques, Moscou, 16-23 Août 1970*, Nauka Publishers, Moscow, 1970, pp. 1-2.

leading power (or powers) in the camp could benefit them. That is why the diplomacy of Henry IV, for example, went out of its way to try and settle the acute controversy between the Pope and Venice in 1606 and 1607, since it was adding muscle to the Hapsburgs' position inside the Catholic camp.

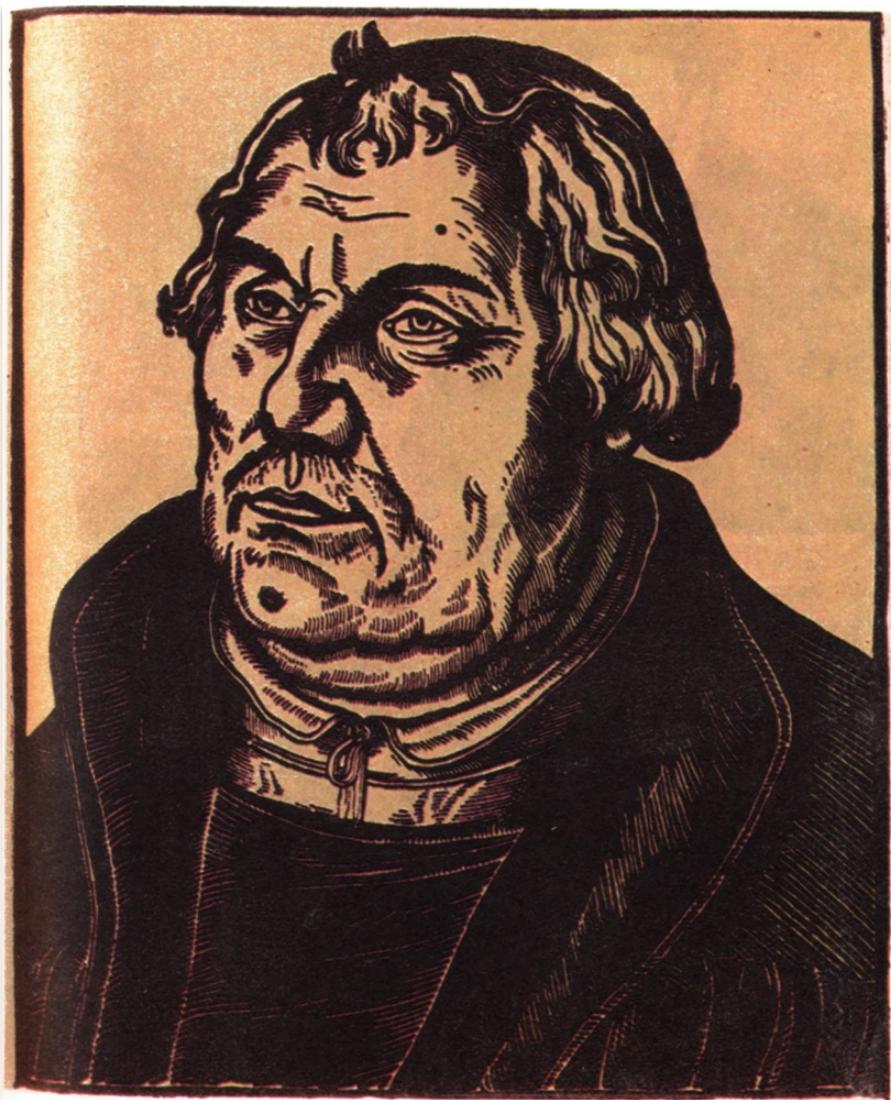
We must also remember that leaders of the Catholic camp often fell prey to their own propaganda. The State Council in Madrid, for example, was wholly convinced at the turn of the 17th century that there was a cruel reign of terror in England against the Catholic part of the population. Projects of outside interference were based on this conviction even when such interference was impossible and contrary to the aims of Spanish policy. Such distorted pictures of the state of affairs were frequently based on tales spread by exiles.

The ambient conflict redoubled the political importance of the exiles. Seeking safety from persecution, French Huguenots moved to Switzerland, England, and later Holland. In the Netherlands, Catholics fled from the northern provinces to the southern which were occupied by Spanish troops, and Protestants from the southern to the northern. The same was true in Germany, where Protestant and Catholic principalities neighboured one another. In the mid-16th century, during the reign of Mary Tudor, Protestants fled from England, while during Elizabeth's long reign Catholics sought shelter in other countries. At the same time, refugees from Italy, Portugal, even Spain, sought asylum from the Inquisition in England.

English exiles acquired a certain amount of influence at the court of Philip II and the courts of Spanish governors in the Netherlands. They willingly served as Spanish spies, and were pleased to involve themselves in conspiracies against Queen Elizabeth and in attempts on her life. Exiles went out of their way at first to engineer a face-to-face confrontation of Spain and England, and later put up all possible roadblocks to attempts at ending the war between the two countries.

Exiles were specifically used to maintain contacts

Martin Luther



Emperor Charles V



The Confession of Augsburg



Luther, Pope and Antichrist



Francis I



Francis I taken prisoner
in the Battle at Pavia

Heretics burned
at the stake
in France



Calvin



Ignatius Loyola



Pope Paul IV



Pope Pius V

Philip II



Duke of Alva

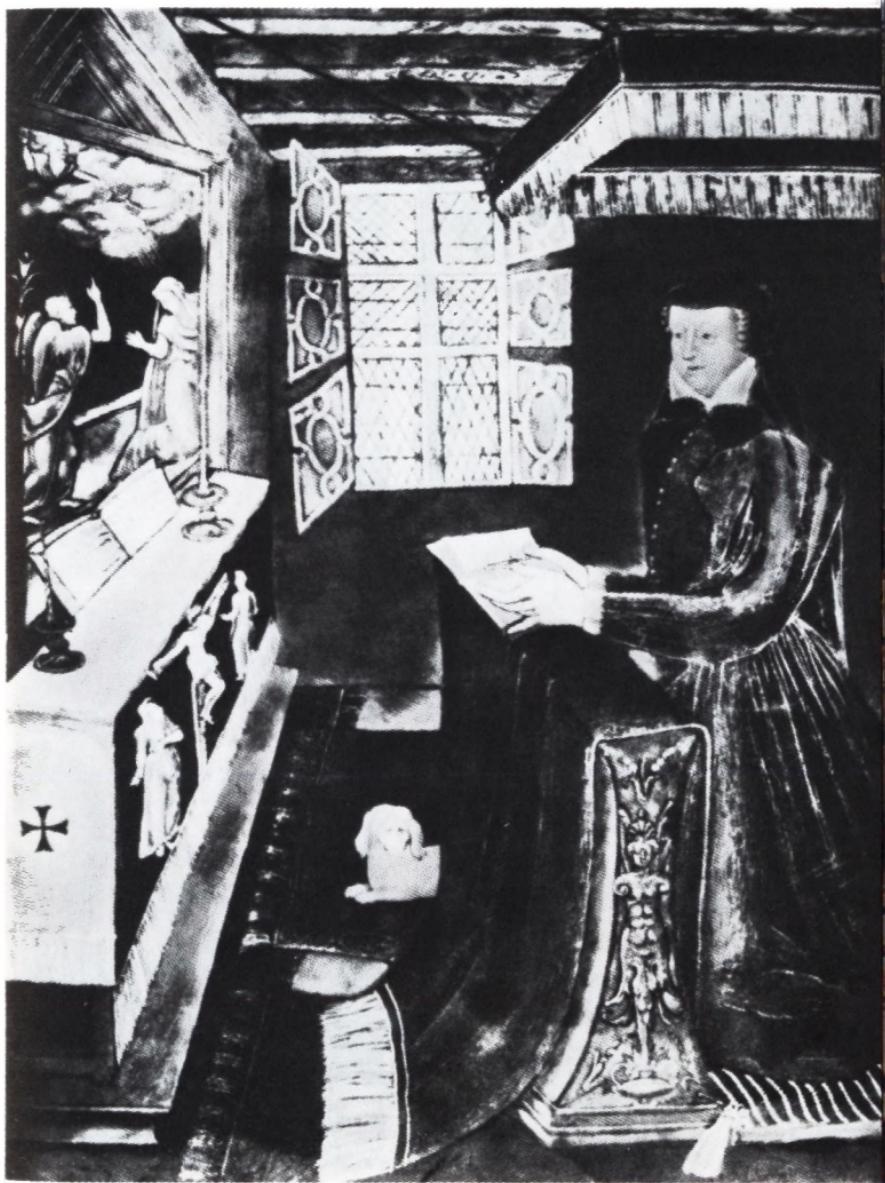


FERDINANDUS ALVARES VAN TOLEDO,
Hertoch van Alva etc.
Gouverneur Generael der Nederlanden.

Philip II
and the Catholic
Counter-Reformation
(an allegorical
representation
by El Greco)



Catherine de Médicis
in the Devil's Chamber



Charles IX



Elizabeth I



Duke Henry Guise



Admiral Coligny

William Cecil,
Lord Burghley



The Massacre
of St Bartholomew's Day



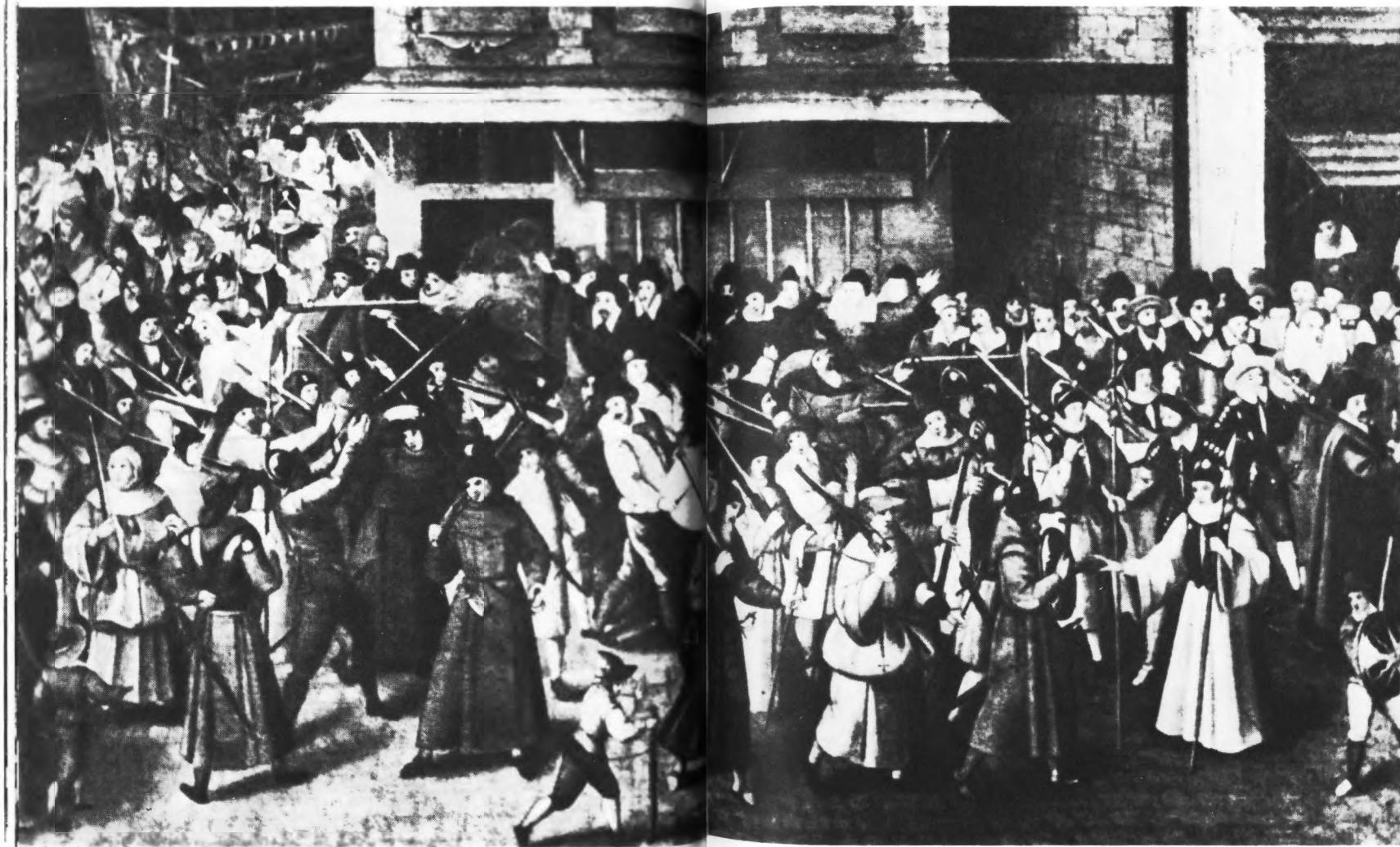
Henry III at the founding
of the religious Order
of the Holy Spirit



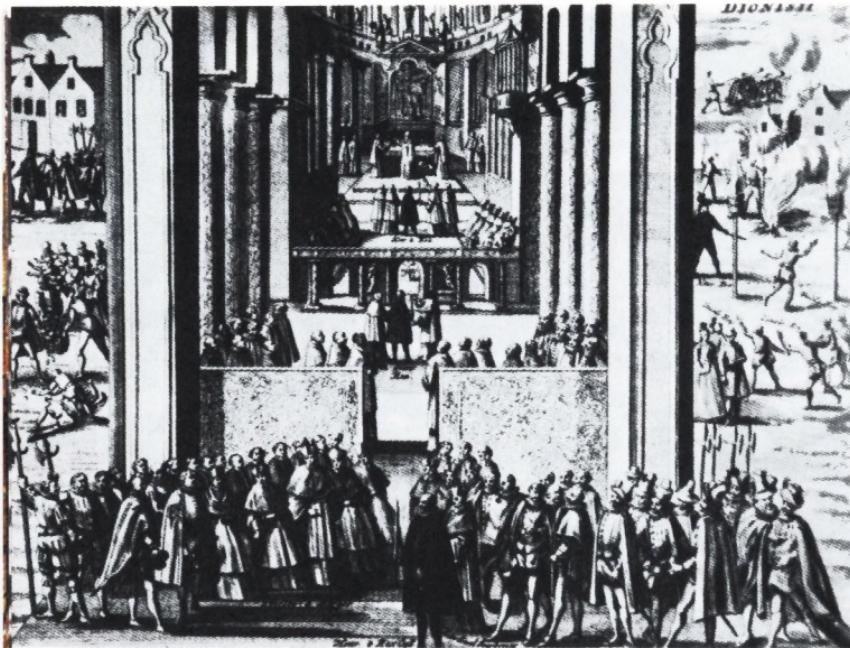
The assassination
of Henry Guise



Procession
of (Catholic) Leaguers
in Paris



“Paris is worth a Mass”.
Henry IV returns
to the Catholic
fold



Henry IV



Alexander
of Parma

Henry IV
besieges Rouen



Louis XIII



Anne
of Austria



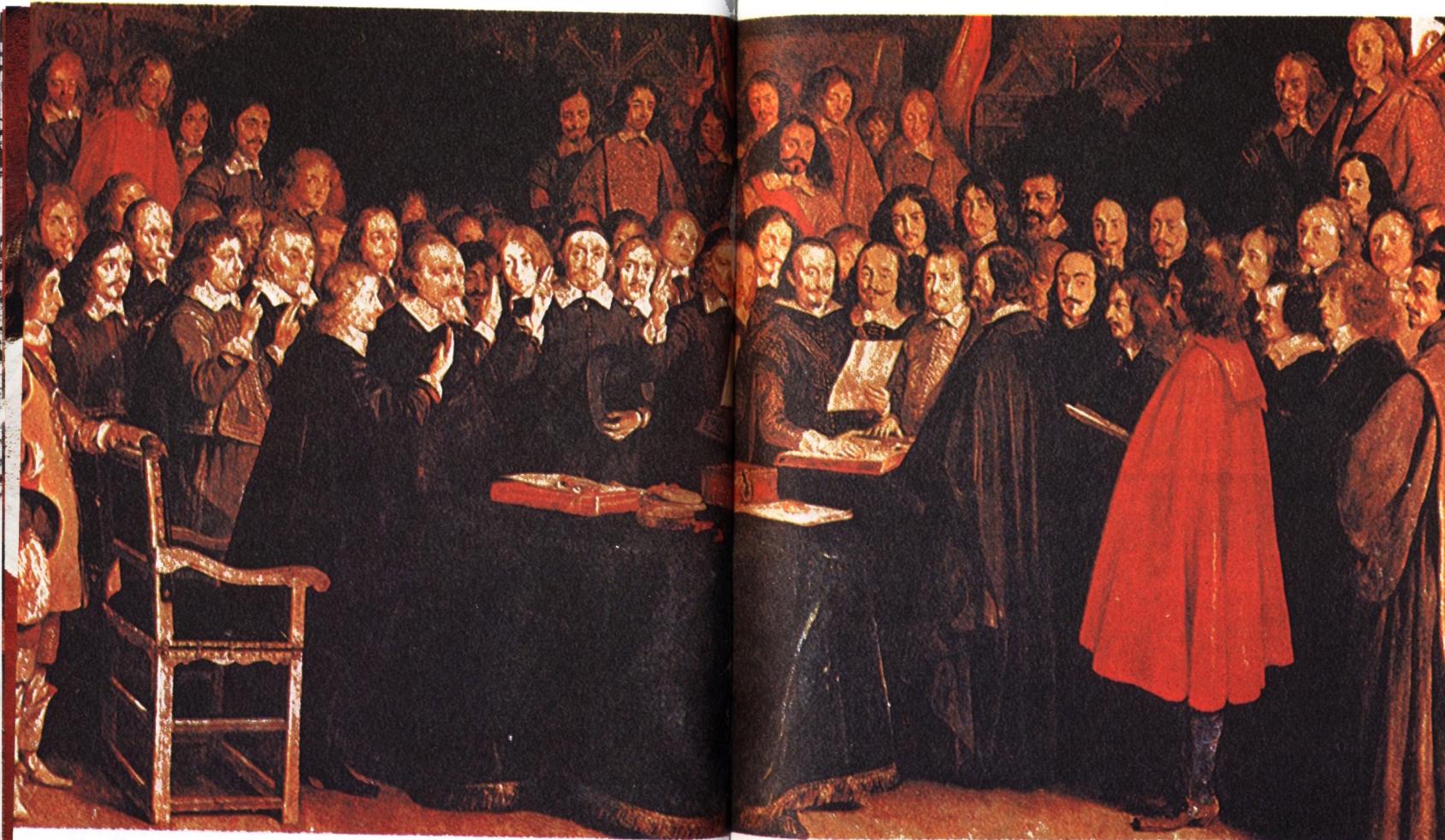
Cardinal Richelieu



Jules Mazarin



Signing
of the Peace
of Westphalia



Spanish Minister
Luis Mendez
de Jara negotiates
with Cardinal Mazarin



Emperor Ferdinand III
ratifies the Peace
of Westphalia

The Battle at Mohacs



Osman atrocities

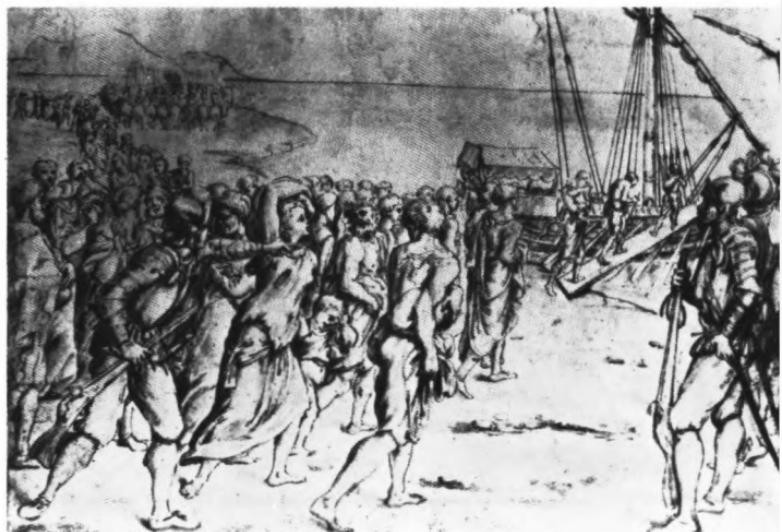


Luther's book
of war against the Turks



Preachers
of revolutionary war

Jacques Pierre Brissot
Anacharsis Cloots



Expulsion
of the Moriscos from Spain

Opponents
of the theory
of revolutionary war

Maximilien de Robespierre



Jean Paul Marat



Bertrand Barère
de Vieuzac

William Pitt the Younger
at the House of Commons
announces war against
the French Republic

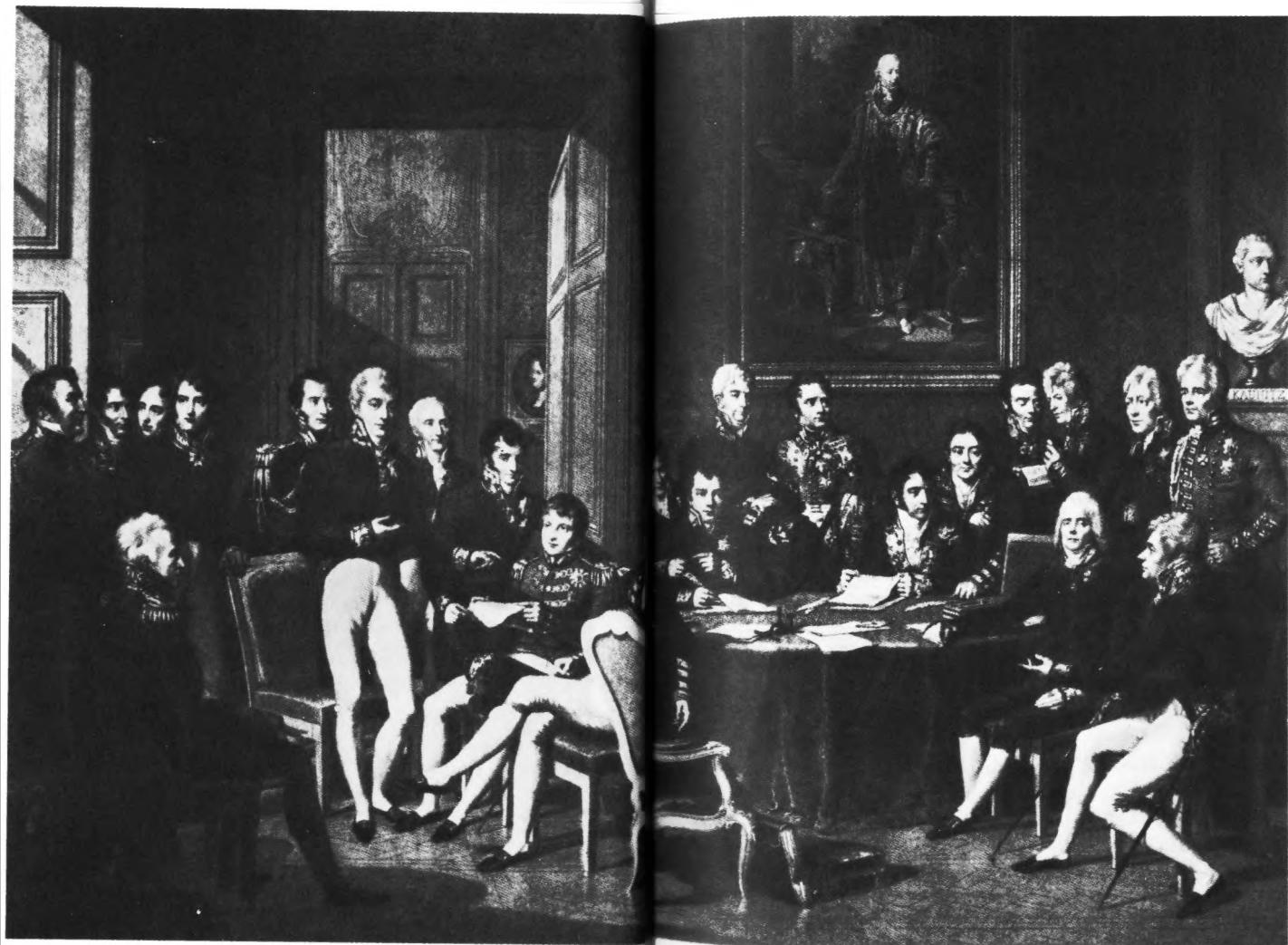


An English cartoon
of Pitt (end
of 18th century)

Edmund Burke



Promised Horrors
of the French Invasion
(An anti-Jacobin cartoon)



Talleyrand



Metternich



between the Counter-Reformation and the Catholic minorities in the Protestant countries. The volume of intelligence that reached Madrid from England at the end of the 16th and in the early 17th century, highly useful to the Spanish, speaks of the magnitude of that line of communication. I might add that many aspects of these contacts are still unknown. In the papers of Hugh Owen, one of the main figures of the Spanish secret service of that period, there is a vague reference to "certain letters of various lords and many leading personages, who undertook by pledges of their persons and fortunes to assist His Majesty and His Highness [the Spanish king and his governor in the Southern Netherlands—*Y.Ch.*] whenever the opportunity came."¹ But Owen did not waste words, as we see, and who these "lords" and "leading personages" were, is still a riddle.

The conclusion of peace treaties did not reduce the intensity of the secret warfare. Among the countless plots of that era, with local and limited aims, there stand out those whose success or failure could radically change the correlation of strength between the camps that collided in the ambient conflict. Some of these plots, which gained international significance, have already been examined between these covers. Others refer to the period after the conclusion of peace between Spain and its two main adversaries, and were directed against England and France rather than the Dutch "rebels" who were still at war with Spain.

Behind Ravaillac's Back

Prior to the conclusion of the Peace of Vervins between Spain and France in 1598 and the peace between Spain and England in 1604, the Counter-Reformation had acted in the open (publicly declaring its participation in the secret war). It tried by all means to prevent France's withdrawal from the

¹ Albert J. Loomie, *The Spanish Elizabethans. The English Exiles at the Court of Philip II*, Fordham University Press, New York, 1963, p. 234.

ambient conflict, and to win over England to the Catholic camp. But after the peace treaties were signed, it could no longer work for these aims in the open. Nothing but covert methods could be used to achieve them.

The behaviour of the main forces of the Counter-Reformation became distinctly ambiguous. Did the Hapsburgs, the Pope, and the Jesuits really aim at eliminating Henry IV and deposing James I, who had ascended the English throne after the death of Elizabeth I in 1608? Or did the Counter-Reformation reconcile itself with the prevailing realities, if only temporarily, seeking some sort of cooperation with the French and English courts, while continuing the conflict in other parts of Europe, above all Germany?

Historians have offered no clear answer to these questions. Not only because liberal and Protestant authors of the past century were "partial" and unfair towards the Catholic camp, and not because the clerical, especially Jesuit, historians, have looked high and low for evidence in the archives of Madrid, Rome, Brussels and Vienna to prove the pure intentions of the Hapsburg powers and the Roman throne or, more precisely, the latter's partiality to peace. The reason lay in the intrinsic ambiguity of the policy of these powers, in its diversity due to contradictory impulses. That is why an abyss lay between official and secret diplomacy, and why the aims of the latter were often unclear and vague. The opponents, on the other hand, ascribed aggressive intentions to the Catholic camp, which the latter found unprofitable to admit.

Among those who would not countenance even temporary interruptions in the struggle, were the Jesuits. And it was no accident, indeed, that already in the 1580s, political assassinations became part of the arsenal of the Society of Jesus. In May 1582, a Jesuit agent, Jean Jauréguy, made an unsuccessful attempt on the life of William of Orange. On July 10, 1584, another Jesuit agent, Balthasar Gérard, wounded and killed the leader of the Dutch rebels. In 1595, a Jesuit fledgling intended to kill the son of William the Silent, Prince Maurice of Nassau, who had assumed

command of the Dutch troops, but was discovered and captured before carrying out his plan. Those were just a few examples of Jesuit tactics, which included attempts to organise the assassination of Elizabeth of England and statesmen in other countries.

The Jesuits' attitude towards Henry IV was highly indicative. As we have already seen, the Pope was quick in recognising Henry IV, and Philip II, too, was compelled to recognise him in 1598. The Jesuits followed suit, but only on the face of it. They were not bothered by Henry's obvious religious indifference or by the Edict of Nantes of 1598 which proclaimed religious toleration. They simply could not stomach the idea of France's withdrawal from the ambient conflict, of its returning to the struggle against the Spanish and Austrian Hapsburgs, the struggle which had, in the opinion of the Society of Jesus, prevented the eradication of the Reformation in its cradle in the early half of the 16th century. The Hapsburgs could conclude a temporary peace with Henry IV, the Jesuits could not.

Fairly often, the Jesuits were more zealously devoted to the interests of the Hapsburgs than the Hapsburg governments in Madrid and Vienna. And the installation of Henry IV on the French throne was incompatible with the Jesuits' aims. It did not worry them that Henry's former Huguenot followers were granted concessions. The main thing for them was that under Henry IV, France was not simply out of the Catholic camp but clearly in the camp of its adversaries, irrespective of this being or not being recorded in treaties with Protestant states. That is why the Jesuit attempts on the life of Henry IV were not simply acts of Catholic fanaticism, as some liberal historians would wish us to believe, nor the effect of some sad misunderstanding, a belated echo of the recently ended religious wars, as some Catholic historians depict the case to justify the Jesuits' role in the fight against the "great king" whose name became the banner of the French 19th-century royalists. They were not bothered by the religious wars in France which belonged to a past stage of the ambient conflict. The Society of Jesus was busily

preparing its imminent third stage despite the zigzags in the Jesuits' political line.

The attempts on Henry IV's life numbered at least nineteen. On December 27, 1595, an unknown youth approached the king who was receiving his courtiers, and tried to stab him in the chest. The assassin missed, for Henry had bowed that minute, the dagger merely slid across his face, and knocked out one of the king's teeth. Jean Chastel, the would-be assassin, had been the tool of two Jesuit fathers, Jean Guignard and Jean Guéret. Guignard was executed, and the Jesuits were driven out of France. Eight years later, however, in 1604, Henry allowed them to return and even made one of them, Father Cotton, his confessor. But this did not reconcile the Jesuits with the king more than outwardly. They knew all too well that while negotiating dynastic marriages between the Bourbons and the Hapsburgs, Henry had mobilised his allies—the English and Swiss, the German Protestant princes, and the Dutch rebels—to counteract the policy of the Madrid and Vienna courts.

While the Society of Jesus may, at a certain moment, have hesitated, wondering if it was worthwhile carrying on the fight against the former heretic who had ascended the French throne, the Spanish had no such doubts and visibly invigorated their activity against him. The Spanish governor of Milan, Count Fuentes, engineered plot after plot against Henry IV.

On May 14, 1610, as Henry was being driven along a narrow Paris street, a stocky red-haired man jumped on to the footboard of his carriage and dealt him several lethal stabs of the dagger. The assassin was a Catholic fanatic by name of Ravaillac from Angoulême, a city that had suffered badly from the religious wars. His subsequent behaviour was reminiscent of that of madman. The judges were reluctant to search for accomplices, while he, himself, kept saying, even on the scaffold, that he had acted on his own.

No one could guess where the search would lead to, if one were undertaken. Would it lead to Catherine Henriette de Balzac d'Entragues, Marquise de Verneuil, a former mistress of the king? Or to

the powerful Duke d'Epernon? Or to Marie de Médicis, the king's wife who was now regent for her little son, the future Louis XIII, or to her intimates, Concino Concini and his wife Leonora Galigai?

A certain Jacqueline Escoman, a maid of Charlotte du Tillet, the mistress of Duke d'Epernon, had tried to warn the king but was prevented from doing so by Jesuit Père Cotton. Later, Jacqueline Escoman maintained that Ravaillac had been connected with Duke d'Epernon and Marquise de Verneuil, and that the Concini's had known of it. Pierre du Jardin, known as La Garde, who had once been an accomplice of Armand de Contaut, baron of Biron, executed for conspiring against the king's life, said that Ravaillac had been an agent of Spanish and Jesuit conspirators. Though the evidence of Jacqueline Escoman and Captain La Garde is controversial, there are ample grounds to say that powerful persons had stood behind Ravaillac, connected with Spain and the Society of Jesus by many different threads.

One basic question remains unanswered. How could Ravaillac know the day best suited for the assassination, had to be after the coronation of Marie de Médicis, which alone entitled her to become regent for her little son after her husband's death? It was impossible to assassinate the king either on May 15, during a hunt, or May 16, the day the queen was to enter the capital in ceremony, or May 17, when the wedding of a prominent noble would take place, or yet May 18, when festivities were to mark that occasion. On all those days the king was safe, surrounded by his bodyguard and his couriers. And on May 19, he would leave for the army massed on the border and poised for action against the Hapsburg powers. Just one suitable day remained, that of May 14. And Ravaillac did not miss it. Inadvertently he let the cat out of the bag during the interrogations, saying that he had known d'Epernon, governor of his native town, that he had waited until after the queen's coronation before taking the king's life, that he had been assured of the nation's desire to get rid of Henry IV, and that he had asked the advice of several priests outside the confessional about killing

the king. (These questions the priests were not obliged to keep secret.) That Charlotte du Tillet had known Ravaillac and had provided him with money, was learned later from the reports of Venetian spies.

I might add that Duke de Sully, the closest friend of Henry IV, and later Cardinal Richelieu, both said in so many words that the king had fallen victim to a foreign plot. In any case, the elimination of Henry IV as he was readying to make war on the Hapsburgs, was clearly in the interests of the Counter-Reformation which was about to instigate a new outbreak of the ambient conflict. "I praise God," wrote a minister to his ruler, Archduke Albert, governor of the Spanish Netherlands, "to see Your Highness delivered from so powerful a neighbour... This is obviously an act of God's providence, which has in similar difficulties so often assisted the gracious House of Austria."¹

The hint was more than transparent. The assassinations of Admiral Coligny, William of Orange, and Henry III were still fresh in men's memory.

The Astrologer

The atmosphere of the ambient conflict enveloped the ideology, literature and art of the times. The Catholic Church associated its patronage of the arts with the struggle against the Reformation, against Protestantism, avowed foe of extravagant temples and rites. The Catholics went out of their way to erect magnificent edifices which, as it were, were seen as the earthly habitat of the Lord, the embodiment on the Earth of the divine beauty of paradise.

Even the new, Gregorian, calendar was tied up in Rome with the ambient conflict. It was produced in secret, and when announced in festive circumstances, the Pope declared it fresh proof of the Lord's everlasting grace. To be sure, the study of astronomical phenomena was invariably connected to the

¹ Philippe Erlanger, *Rodolphe II de Habsbourg...*, p. 236.

chief political problems of the time in other ways as well.

We might describe astrology as an unofficial "science" of the ambient conflict, not acknowledged in the religious doctrines, the ideologies of the two belligerent camps. Still, it was at the time of the conflict that we witness the bloom or, more precisely, the spread, of astrology, which in the early 16th century had been quite obviously losing credibility.¹ It was at the time the conflict gained in intensity that it became customary to prophesy historical events. Lastly, astrology's star did not begin to wane until the lifetime of the first generation that grew up after the conflict had ended. This significant coincidence in time is hardly accidental. In 1588, Europe was awaiting the fulfilment of the prophecies of Johann Müller, also known by his Latinised appellation, Regiomontanus, a Koenigsberg mathematician who also dabbled in astrology. This scholar, who died a hundred years before, in 1476, had assured all concerned that the most important events since Christ's death occurred at definite intervals, and that these cycles were connected with the motion of the stars.

Philipp Melanchthon, a Protestant theologian and a leader of the Reformation, noted that the previous cycle had ended in 1518 when the Pope denounced Luther, and would be followed by 70 years of the biblical Babylonian captivity. According to Melanchthon, the fulfilment of the Apocalypse should be expected in 1588—the seventh seal would be broken, Antichrist cast down, and the Day of Judgement rung in. Small wonder that Madrid found this prophecy inconvenient during the months the Invincible Armada was completing its preparations. It tended to ascribe the increasing desertion of seamen, and the difficulty of recruiting men for the army, to the adverse influence of that prophecy. Philip II had all astrologers imprisoned, with Church sermons condemning unrighteous predictions as evil sorcery.

¹ Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, Phaidon Press, London, 1944, pp. 314-320.

The court of Queen Elizabeth, too, was confounded by various interpretations of the prophecy. Doctor John Dee, the court astrologer, came to the conclusion that the second eclipse of the Moon in 1588 augured the demise of the queen. The Privy Council issued strict orders that this intelligence should be kept secret. But Regiomontanus's prophecy was in some way leaked to the public, and the government had had to issue pamphlets to refute his conjectures.

How strongly astrological conjectures affected the political theories of the time may be illustrated by the writings of Eitzing, an Austrian Catholic who had moved from Antwerp to Cologne when the Revolt of the Netherlands began, and who was among the first in Europe to arrange for the regular publication of news. In his historical works, Eitzing portrayed the struggle between the Counter-Reformation and Protestantism as an alternation of the cycles of war and peace, of which he counted as many as six during the Netherlands revolution since 1559. These ideas resonated fairly often in various political and philosophical treatises of the 16th and the early half of the 17th century.

Those who have read *Queen Margot* of Alexander Dumas (père) will recall the mysterious soothsayer, Rémy, the Florentine perfumer at the court of Catherine de Médicis, the queen-mother. He was not a figment of the novelist's imagination. Rémy had existed and taken part in the intrigues that abounded in Catherine's life. But Dumas endowed him also with the features of the astrologer, Lorenzo Ruggieri.

Still, in the eyes of posterity the greatest augurer of all was Nostradamus. Jean-Aymès de Chavigny, who had known the mysterious Nostradamus well in the concluding period of the latter's life, wrote the following in 1594 about the origins of the book of prophecies and the *Centuries*:

"Anticipating important moves and changes that were to occur all over Europe, and foreseeing bloody civil wars and disastrous risings that were inescapably

in store for the Gaulish kingdom, Nostradamus began, full of enthusiasm and moved by an absolutely new frenzy, to write his *Centuries* and other prophecies."

Michel de Nostredame (1503-1566), so named after the Cathedral of Notre Dame where he had been christened, known by the Latinised version of his surname, Nostradamus, was born in the town of St Rémy, Provence, in the family of a notary public. At 19 he began studying medicine and three years later, in 1525, received a physician's licence. Later, he travelled widely. Upon returning to Provence, he practised as a physician in the small town of Salon, between Marseilles and Avignon, and spent much time studying magic and astrology. His annual almanacs with prophecies of events in the coming 12 months began appearing in 1550, and were published right up to the astrologer's death. The first edition of the *Centuries* (so named because the prophecies were usually in rhymed quatrains, with 400 lines comprising a "century") was put out in 1555. That first edition contained three and a half "centuries", with the end of the fourth and the fifth, sixth and seventh "centuries" appearing later that year. In any case, the first seven "centuries" were published in an extant printing of 1557. They contained prophecies covering the next two thousand years, a period until the year 3797.

Catherine de Médicis summoned Nostradamus to Paris. He was received by the queen-mother and then discussed various topics, from horoscopes to cosmetics, for several hours. According to legend, Nostradamus predicted that Catherine de Médicis's three sons would successively occupy the French throne. But this episode is much reminiscent of a similar augury ascribed to Lorenzo Ruggieri. In any case, Nostradamus returned home to Salon-de-Provence a European celebrity.

"He had an affinity for money," one of his latest biographers, the American historian Edgar Leoni, wrote of Nostradamus. "All in all, his various expedients to make money suggest the modern medical man who writes sensational sex books or offers

oneshot remedies for all sorts of psychic malaises."¹ In 1564, introduced to the young Henry of Navarre, Nostradamus told him he would in time receive all his due. Leoni shows convincingly that Nostradamus's references to divine revelations and clairvoyance were made to magnify his own self.² The true "source" of his prophecies were magic and astrology.

Long-drawn-out international conflicts raged and intertwined intricately during the lifetime of Nostradamus. He "prophesied" that they would grow and become sharper, and was not mistaken (probably in this alone). For example, in the 44th quatrain of the ninth "century" he warned the people of Geneva of a Calvinist purge or the Calvinists of being exterminated by Philip II. In a message to Henry II, king of France, he referred to the persecution the Catholic Church would experience for 11 years at the hands of an unrighteous monarch acting in alliance with Mohammedans.

One of the most famous "prophecies" concerned the then reigning Henry II. His wife, Catherine de Médicis, asked Luc Gauric, the astrologer of Pope Paul III, to draw up the king's horoscope. Gauric is said to have recommended that the king avoid single combat in any fenced off place, especially at the age of 41, because at that time his life would be imperilled by a wound in the head that would cause either blindness or death. Catherine did not trust the prophecy, for the king would not be likely to fight anyone singly. Still, she asked for the opinion of the celebrated astrologers of her time, Pierre Gassendi, Gabriele Simeoni, and Jérôme Cardan, who produced disparate judgements of what the combination of stars on the firmament spelled for the king. Thereupon, Catherine turned to Nostradamus, who declared in his *Centuries*:

*The young lion will overcome
the older one, in a field of*

¹ *The Prophecies and Enigmas of Nostradamus*, ed. by Liberté E. Le Vert, Firebell Books, Glen Rock, N.J., 1979, pp. 10, 11.

² Edgar Leoni, *Nostradamus: Life and Literature*, Exposition Press, New York, 1961, pp. 105-108.

*combat in single fight: He will
pierce his eyes in their golden
cage; two wounds in one, then
he dies a cruel death.*

On June 30, 1559, when Henry took part in a knightly tournament, it occurred to no one that the contest could be called a "field of combat" and that the king's gilded helmet could be a "golden cage". Still, Catherine begged her husband twice to stay out of it. Henry ignored her. He ordered the initially reluctant captain of the Scottish guards, Count Montgomery, to oppose him in contest. Montgomery's spear broke against Henry's armour, with a large fragment of wood flying upward, raising the helmet, and piercing the king's left eye. The wound was deep, the physicians helpless, and ten days later the king died. A lion's depiction in the king's coat-of-arms and also in Montgomery's, his unintentional killer, seems to account for the young and older lions in Nostradamus's quatrain though some commentators deny that the emblem was used by either of the contestants. Still, we read in the *Centuries* (IV, 47):

*When the ferocious king will
have exercised his bloody hand
through fire, the sword and
the bended bow. All the nation
will be so terrified seeing
the great ones hanging by
their neck and feet.*

The "ferocious king" is here a translation of the French "le noir farouche" in which the last word, "farouche", may mean "cruel" or "unsociable" as well as "ferocious". What is more interesting, however, is that "noir" was probably an anagram of "roi," meaning "king". What we get is the "ferocious king", the "cruel king", or the "unsociable king". Contemporaries, and many commentators of later years, saw this quatrain as a prophecy of the carnage of St Bartholomew's Day when, as legend had it, the ferocious and unsociable Charles IX

sniped with an arquebus out of a window in the Louvre at victims who were trying to escape their killers. The crowd dragged the much abused corpse of Admiral Coligny through the streets and finally hanged him by a leg.

In another well-known quatrain (III, 30) it said that those who had earlier fought with arms in hand, would support someone more important than "he" himself, and that, caught unawares, naked in his bed, "he" would be inflicted harm by six persons. Admiral Coligny, leader of the Huguenots, who had made war on the king, made peace with him in 1572 and became a powerful figure at the court. His influence on Charles IX was so great that Catherine de Médicis was displeased. Shortly before St Bartholomew's Day Coligny was shot and wounded from behind a corner, but survived. He was killed by the Duke of Guise, the duke's servant, and several Swiss mercenaries, who had broken into his home during the massacre.

We might ask if Nostradamus's prophecy had, perhaps, been one of the motivations for the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre. Shortly before that event, a man named Charron, who was close to the king, had said on learning that Admiral Coligny's wound inflicted by a mercenary assassin was not dangerous, that Nostradamus had a prophecy for the night of August 23/24, 1572. One of the annual almanacs published by the astrologer did contain an entry of what was to happen that night "pris en dormant".¹

In a time of great difficulties at the court, the entry said (III, 55), the ruler of Blois would kill his friend, and the kingdom would be under double doubt. During the religious wars, in 1589 to be precise, Duke Henry Guise, leader of the Catholics and cousin of Henry III who had fled from Paris to Blois, was killed on the king's orders. Soon thereafter, Henry III himself was stabbed to death by friar

¹ N. M. Sutherland, *The French Secretaries of State in the Age of Catherine de Medici*, The Athlone Press, London, 1962, p. 177.

Jacques Clément, which put the succession under a double doubt—first, owing to the absence of an heir professing the Catholic faith and, second, owing to the fact that Henry of Navarre, leader of the Huguenots, was claimant to the throne.

Nostradamus pointed out (X, 18):

*The house of Lorraine will
make way for Vendôme, the
high put low and the low exalted.
The son of Hamon¹ will
be elected in Rome, and the
two great ones will be put at a loss.*

The “house of Lorraine”, that of the Guises, was elbowed away by Henry IV, Duke of Vendôme. Henry, who was nicknamed “*le petit Béarnais*”, became king, despite the efforts to the contrary of Duke Henry Guise and his brother, Duke de Mayenne, leaders of the Catholic League. The heretic Henry, son of Hamon (or Ammon, the Egyptian god, that is, an enemy of Christendom), was recognised by Rome.

And one more example of an apparently successful prophecy (IX, 49):

*The Parliament of London
will put their king to death.*

These two lines seem to predict the execution of Charles I, sentenced to death by the Parliament of London. The king was beheaded on January 30, 1649, that is, slightly less than a hundred years after the publication of the *Centuries*, where it says (X, 100):

*A great empire will be for
England, the all-powerful for
more than 300 years. Great
forces cross by land and sea.*

¹ A god of wealth of the ancient Syrians, and in the Scriptures a symbol of earthly goods which people uncognisant of God worshipped.

And one more of the best known quatrains (IX, 20):

*By night will come through
the forest of Reins two part-
ners, by a roundabout way;
the Queen, the white stone.
The monk-King dressed in
grey at Varennes. The Elected
Capet causes tempest, fire and
bloody slicing.*

This quatrain was considered a prophecy of the escape from Varennes of Louis XVI, dressed in grey and abandoned by his people (a monk-king, a lonely king), and of Marie Antoinette, dressed in white, who changed their route along the way. Following Louis XVI's conversion into a constitutional monarch, the trone was toppled and he was guillotined.

In the 400-odd years since the death of Nostradamus, his *Centuries* have been given no fewer than 6,000 different interpretations. One investigator found that out of the 449 prophecies, 18 were obviously incorrect and 41 might be considered fulfilled (though many of them were so worded as to have equal chances of fulfilment and non-fulfilment), while 390 or the vast majority cannot be identified with anything that occurred in the first 300 years after their publication. The prophecies would have been more successful, I am sure, if they had been made by flipping a coin.

Time and again, researchers tried to find predictions of 20th-century conflicts in the prophecies of Nostradamus. In the 1930s and 40s there were those who identified the word Hister, that is, the old name of the Danube which occurs in Nostradamus's writings, with Hitler, who had, they said, been born on the Danube (which is, in fact, incorrect, because the Nazi Führer was born in Braunau on the river Inn).

In May 1940, during the Nazi blitzkrieg against France, the Luftwaffe dropped leaflets with Nostradamus's auguries of German victories. And the British Intelligence Service made use of prophecies

relating to the Hister to produce a faked quatrain allegedly taken from the *Centuries* of Nostradamus:

*Hister, who in his warlike struggles
Has borne more victories than was good for him;
Six will murder him in the night,
Naked, without armour, he will succumb.*

This forgery, along with other appropriately doctored quatrains from the *Centuries*, was dropped by the RAF over German towns in 1943 as a prophecy of the war's outcome and Germany's defeat.¹

In 1976 Pigeard de Gurbert (Dr de Fontbrune) published a book on what Nostradamus had, in his opinion, really said, which was highly publicised by the yellow press in the West.² The book explained to the uninitiated the "divine" nature of the "prophecies" contained in the *Centuries*. Taking the cue from the swindling "research" of Jean-Charles de Fontbrune, the French journal *Paris Match* stunned its readers in the summer of 1981 with the sensational "prediction" that the West was about to suffer a Soviet-Moslem invasion. "The Russians will come to Paris within seven days ... and destroy it," Fontbrune announced.³

And in October 1981, as well as a year later, in the autumn of 1982, *Paris Match* informed its readers that a French scholar and astronomer living in the United States and working for NASA, one Maurice Chatelain, had put the *Centuries* through a computer and thereby learned that Russians and Moslems ... would invade Europe.

Nostradamus had been a "clairvoyant" of the time of ambient conflicts. Reactionaries, therefore, keep turning to him again and again precisely at times of such confrontations.

¹ *The Prophecies of Nostradamus*, ed. By Erika Cheetham, Corgi Books, London, 1973, p. 14; John Sladek, *The New Apocrypha. A Guide to Strange Sciences and Occult Beliefs*, Panther Books, London, 1978, p. 315.

² Dr de Fontbrune, *Ce que Nostradamus a vraiment dit*, Editions Stock, Paris, 1976, p. 41.

³ *Paris Match*, No. 1677/17, July 1981, p. 7; No. 1682/21, August 1981, p. 29.

A Breather Before the Thirty Years War

American historian Richard S. Dunn wrote that throughout the 17th century the ideological conflict "left a permanent impress on nearly every aspect of European life: on concepts of liberty and toleration, on party politics, business enterprise, social structure, science, philosophy, and the arts".¹ (This is, indeed, true, but mainly with regard to the early half of the century.) In the hundred years from 1540 to 1640, only four years—1548, 1550, 1559, and 1610—saw no large military actions in Western Europe. It would be wrong, of course, to think that the ambient conflict developed along a straight line upward, which was then replaced by a no less straight but downward line. The line was rather a zigzag in both its upward and downward phases. The new period of peace (the early years of the 17th century until the outbreak of the Thirty Years War) was thus a time when the Counter-Reformation clearly lost the impulse which it had in the first few decades after the Council of Trent. The popes of the early half of the 17th century had none of the fanatical zeal of Pope Pius V who had excommunicated Queen Elizabeth. When Pope Urban VIII was told he should also excommunicate Louis XIII for supporting Protestant countries, he replied that his reason prompted him not to imitate Pius V. These fluctuations in the power of ideological conviction did not always or entirely coincide with the fluctuations in the political and military struggle.

While often pragmatic in its own policy, Rome demanded of other countries that they should abide strictly by the interests of the Catholic camp in the struggle against either Protestantism or Islam. The papal curia thrice censured Venice for its many refusals to participate in armed campaigns against the Porte, and for striving to maintain diplomatic and commercial ties with Protestant, even non-Christian, countries. This had been one of the reasons

¹ Richard S. Dunn, *The Age of Religious Wars, 1559-1689*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1970, p. ix.

why the Pope issued an interdict forbidding the Republic of St Mark to perform certain ecclesiastical acts and rites, valid for several months in 1606 and 1607. Bertolt Brecht took subtle note of this. In his play, *Leben des Galilei*, the Inquisitor advises the Pope to persecute the scholar, and says:

“Plague, war and the Reformation have reduced Christianity to a few dwindling outposts. The rumour spreads through Europe that you are in secret alliance with Lutheran Sweden to weaken the Catholic Emperor. And now these worms, these mathematicians, turn their telescopes to the skies and tell the world that your Holiness is even wrong about Heaven.”¹

In the latter half of the 1620, the Huguenots, especially those living in their main stronghold, La Rochelle, were sure they could count on the support of Madrid, which would try to handcuff the French government and prevent it from joining in the Thirty Years War on the side of the anti-Hapsburg powers. Marshal Henri de Schomberg reported to Paris in April 1628 that the Huguenots in various parts of the country were counting on Spanish aid. “They say,” he wrote, “that the Spanish will help them for they will not suffer that the king should take La Rochelle.”² In fact, however, the State Council in Madrid had discussed the issue before weighing the pros and cons of complying with the Huguenot request for aid to the fortress of La Rochelle, besieged by Cardinal Richelieu’s troops. It was not easy to refrain from thus damaging the interests of France, the chief enemy. Still, the State Council justified its aid to the Huguenots by the thought that otherwise the people of La Rochelle would place themselves at the disposal of the Netherlands, which would make the fortress an outpost of the Dutch heretics.

Later, after retiring, Count Olivares, then the architect of Spain’s policy, boasted that he had done well not to follow the counsel of the Machiavellians to overlook the interests of the faith, though this

¹ Bertolt Brecht, *The Life of Galileo*, Eyre Methuen, London, 1980, p. 70.

² Pierre Grillon, *Les papiers de Richelieu*, Vol. III, 1628, Editions A. Pedone, Paris, 1979, p. 161.

would have enabled him to escape involvement "in wars with Swedes, Danes, and the Protestant heretics of Holland, and would have divided France".¹

To be sure, within the Protestant camp as well, references to the conflict often motivated attempts to secure a change of policy in another country. The Netherlands, for example, seeking to expedite a peace treaty between Sweden and Russia, which had been a topic of negotiations from 1614 to 1617, stressed in a message to King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden that Christendom was in danger and that they (the Protestant states) had to defend themselves against aggression on the part of Jesuits and other papists in Sweden, which was dependent on Dutch financial aid. It was hinted that this aid would continue if Gustavus Adolphus suited his policy to the interests of the Netherlands² which were identified with the interests of the Protestant camp in the ambient conflict. Attempts to serve state interests (whenever this went against the interests of the Counter-Reformation) were described by the Catholic camp, especially Rome, as Machiavellism in the negative meaning that the word acquired as a synonym of cunning and duplicity, wholly distorting the true meaning of the views of the great Italian thinker.

The negative meaning of the word Machiavellism gained currency, and this also in the Protestant countries. But already in the early 17th century, Francis Bacon praised Machiavelli for describing what people do rather than what they should do. And one associate of Cardinal Richelieu (perhaps the Grey Eminence, Father Joseph himself, who headed the cardinal's secret service) wrote that "the best advice one can give in matters of state is based on special knowledge of the state itself".³

¹ J. H. Elliott, "The Statecraft of Olivares", in *The Diversity of History*, ed. by J. H. Elliott and H. G. Koenigsberger, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, N. Y., 1970, p. 128.

² See B. A. Wainstein, *Russia and the Thirty Years War*, Moscow, 1947, p. 34 (in Russian).

³ William J. Bouwsma, "The Secularisation of Society in the Seventeenth Century", in *XIII International Congress of Historical Sciences, Moscow, August 16-23, 1970. Reports*, Nauka Publishers, Moscow, 1970, p. 9.

The progress of the ambient conflicts inevitably contradicted the balance of power which it was increasingly the aim of most European countries to maintain. Victory in ambient conflicts could usually be attained only by a coalition of states. And victory greatly facilitated or even secured the coalition's predominance in Europe (or the international arena as a whole). And that prospect alone was enough to set countries which had earlier sought to manoeuvre and keep neutral, against the winning side.

No less important was it that as the victory approached or seemed to approach, and as that victory became increasingly identified with the prospective hegemony of the leading power of the winning camp, the latter rapidly lost its erstwhile unity. This unity was increasingly disrupted by the aggravation of contradictions between the countries of that camp.

In this fashion, concern for the maintenance of the equilibrium, of the power balance, proved incompatible with any military solution of the ambient conflict—which also led to the appearance of additional obstacles that the winning side had to cope with, including obstacles within its own ranks.

It may be right to note in this connection that already on the eve of the Thirty Years War the Hapsburg camp devised a doctrine that three and a half centuries later got to be known in the USA as the "domino theory". Count Olivares, the maker of Spanish policy, invariably portrayed Madrid's plans as defensive, though, in fact, they were obviously aggressive. At the same time, he never failed to declare that any possible Protestant success in any part of the world was an impingement upon the interests of Spain. Here is how Olivares formulated it:

"Major and fundamental dangers threaten Milan, Flanders and Germany. Any such blow would be fatal for this monarchy, since should we sustain a great loss at one of these points, the rest would follow, and after Germany would fall Italy, after Italy, Flanders, then the Indies [meaning the Span-

ish colonies in the Western and Eastern hemispheres —Y.Ch.], Naples, and Sicily.”¹

This theory plausibly justified resort to force, all interventions and seizures, and especially all interference in the internal affairs of other countries by methods of secret warfare. The other pretext for this, of course, was the existence of the ambient conflict.

Gradual withdrawal from that conflict did not make it any the less valid and convenient pretext for inner political moves. Recall the Gunpowder Plot in England—an abortive plot by a number of Catholic gentlemen, Robert Catesby, Thomas Percy, Guy Fawkes, and others, to work a mine from the cellar of an adjoining house under the House of Lords, and to store in it 36 barrels of gunpowder which were to blow up the Parliament in November 1605 when James I was due to attend its opening. The plotters hoped to start a Catholic revolt in the central counties, and counted on a regiment of English Catholic exiles landing in England with the help of Archduke Albert, the semi-independent Spanish governor of the Southern Netherlands. The plot was discovered at the last minute, and part of the plotters fleeing London perished in a clash with a pursuing force, while the rest were executed. Among the executed was Father Garnet, a Jesuit leader, who had operated underground. The Jesuits maintained that they had not known of the plot until shortly before its discovery. But this is doubtful, because Catesby and his companions were frequent guests at Garnet’s clandestine headquarters in a suburb of the English capital.

The controversy over the mainsprings of the Gunpowder Plot, started by Jesuit historians at the end of the past century and continued today, has grown sharper of late. Was the plot, whose discovery on November 5 has been celebrated over the centuries as Guy Fawkes Day, really a plot engineered by

¹ R. A. Stradling, *Europe and the Decline of Spain. A Study of the Spanish System, 1580-1720*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1981, p. 70.

English Catholics who were relying on the aid of the international Counter-Reformation? Or did the latter have nothing to do with it, having long since lost hope of "converting" England? Was the plot a crafty provocation engineered by Robert Cecil, son of Lord Burghley and King James's chief minister and head of the secret service, in order to prompt the king to leave in force the repressive anti-Catholic laws and, what was for him more important, to show that he, Robert Cecil, was irreplaceable as the factual head of government? Jesuit historians, especially Francis Edwards, have applied themselves to proving that the latter version of the Gunpowder Plot was the right one, but have failed in this. One thing is clear: at that time, England had much less to fear from the Counter-Reformation than before, and the adroit Robert Cecil, who knew this, was eager to retain the declining threat as a foil that he could exploit in internal political affairs (among other things, to invigorate his own influence on the king). Indeed, the possibility of an intervention by the Catholic powers had turned, from an entirely real and deadly peril that had stalked England, during the lifetime of a whole generation into a spurious threat exploited by shrewd political schemers.

In the early 17th century, the Catholic bloc was decidedly buttressed by deserters from the opposing camp—by that part of the nobility which had earlier backed the Reformation. This tendency was witnessed in France, in the Hapsburg lands, and in Poland. And one of the reasons for this was the withdrawal of the advantages that the Reformation had previously granted a certain section of the gentry: seizure of Church and monastic lands, use of the religious flag to win autonomy from the crown, and so on. Another motivation was the nobility's striving for class unity in face of the sharply mounting popular resistance that was taking the form of hundreds of peasant and urban revolts, and, along with this, the prospect of gaining lucrative office at the royal court, etc. This change of heart among the nobility, though it temporarily strengthened the Catholic camp, also redoubled its reactionary nature, making

its aims still more incompatible with the irrepressible development tendencies that prevailed in society.

Still, the more advanced proto-capitalist countries in that era of transition from feudalism to capitalism did not further social progress in Europe as a whole any more than moderately; besides, in only some parts of the continent. Essentially, the influence was felt within the sphere of economic ties and international affairs, and was not properly apprehended by contemporaries. Aside from the positive influences of the advanced countries, there were also influences that stimulated reactionary tendencies. (Suffice it to recall the classical example of the "second" serfdom of peasants in countries east of the Elbe as a result of the growth of trade between them and the proto-capitalist states or the capitalist sectors of other West European countries.)

The camp of the Reformation, too, was racked by contradictions between different Protestant denominations, especially Lutheranism and Calvinism, which were the reigning creeds in some of the North European countries. They did not stop accusing each other of heresy even when a direct threat arose of a Hapsburg victory. And as time went on, the heterogeneity of the progressive camp became increasingly apparent. Apart from the Netherlands, a proto-capitalist country, it consisted of absolutist monarchies reigning in nation-states (including Catholic France), and of German Protestant principalities.

There is also this important point. Many a study has been written to probe the inception of absolutism. Yet some fairly important aspects of the process have not been brought out. One of the neglected points is that absolutism surfaced in most countries against the setting of the ambient conflict. Second, the impact of the historically progressive and historically reactionary sides of the absolutist monarchies depended largely on the place which the country concerned occupied in the ambient conflict, on whether it was in the conservative or the progressive camp—especially in the concluding stage of that conflict, that is, in the early half of the 17th century.

This was the time when the role objectively played by absolutist monarchies in "their countries" tended gradually to change. The more developed the capitalist relations became there, the more conclusively did the former historically progressive role of royal absolutism vanish into thin air, and the more distinctly did absolutism become an obstacle to further social progress.

This was most clearly seen in England, which was rapidly advancing towards a bourgeois revolution. But an analogous tendency, though less distinct, also made itself felt in France. Turning more and more into an enemy of the progressive forces inside the country, and increasingly expressing the interests of feudal reaction to the exclusion of other sections of society, absolutism could not maintain its previous resolute opposition to the camp of international reaction. And though that camp was, as before, busily plotting against the independence of nation-states, and thereby against their absolutist governments, these latter sought to come to some sort of agreement with it.

In April 1603, Henry IV wrote to James I, successor to Queen Elizabeth, that her death was a great loss to him and to all good Frenchmen because "she had been an irreconcilable enemy of his irreconcilable enemies".¹

James I (Stuart) set out to achieve a rapprochement with Spain. This generated ever mounting opposition among those very segments of English society which subsequently, during the revolution, headed the struggle against the absolutism of the Stuarts. Even when, during one more zigzag in foreign policy (in 1625-26), Charles I, son and successor of James I, took the side of the foes of the reactionary camp, the conflict with the bourgeois opposition inside the country deprived him of the wherewithal for fighting a war or extending

¹ *Mémoires de Maximilien de Bethune, duc de Sully, principal ministre de Henry le Grand*, Volume IV, London, 1747, p. 242; compare D. M. Bushmakin, "History of 17th-Century French Diplomacy", in *The Middle Ages*, Issue 7, 1955, p. 303.

financial aid to his allies, notably Denmark, who were then fighting against the Hapsburgs.

After the assassination of King Henry IV, attempts to alter the foreign policy of France were made by the government of the queen-mother, Marie de Médicis, regent for her son Louis XIII. True, the reason prompting the change was the weakness of the central authorities undermined by the separatism of the nobility.

As we see seemingly conflicting reasons prompted the absolutist governments of nation-states to seek a compromise deal with the Hapsburg camp. Objectively, they did not aim at ending the ambient conflict. Any compromise—whatever the illusory hopes in the Louvre or Whitehall may have been—meant in fact that the reactionary camp would gain time to prepare and choose the moment for striking against its enemies, above all in Germany, who were denied any effective support of the other opponents of the Hapsburgs. The seeming reconciliation only fired the aggressiveness of the Catholic camp, which gained confidence that it would succeed in crushing its enemies one by one, and, at the same time, in carrying forward in several successive stages its old plan of establishing a universal monarchy. In other words, it hoped to win the ambient conflict with resort to arms.

Cardinal Richelieu and Anne of Austria

In the early 17th century no one yet ventured to predict the decline of Spain. This, indeed, was farthest from the thoughts of the government run by the queen-mother and regent, Marie de Médicis, who completely reversed the foreign policy followed by Henry IV. She had her son, Louis XIII, marry the Spanish king's daughter, the famous Anne of Austria, so called in honour of her mother, an Austrian princess, which made her a representative both of the Spanish and the Austrian branches of the house of Hapsburgs.

Young Louis XIII, free at last of his mother's

tutelage, and his advisers regarded the Thirty Years War as a clash between the emperor and his conspiring Protestant subjects (much like the one which Louis himself was involved in with the French Huguenots).

Cardinal Richelieu, who began his career as a favourite of Marie de Médicis, had from the very outset intended to follow an entirely different policy. In 1624, having betrayed his protectress who was at daggers drawn with her son, he won the king's confidence and became, in fact, the ruler of France. Whereupon he at once abruptly altered the French aims and orientations in foreign affairs.

Richelieu picked up the threads of the foreign policy of Henry IV. Back in 1616, he had written: "Though divided in faith we remain united under one prince, for whose service no Catholic is so blind as to think a Spaniard better than a French Huguenot."

On becoming the chief minister of Louis XIII, Richelieu set out to eliminate the political independence of the Huguenots, who were still a state within a state, his bid culminating in the siege and capture of La Rochelle, the main stronghold of the French Protestants, in 1628. But this was not meant to involve France in the ambient conflict. Quite the contrary. The purpose was to obtain the maximum advantages out of that conflict.

In his drive to consolidate royal power, for which purpose he had indeed wiped out the political autonomy of the Huguenots, Richelieu extended considerable support to the Protestant camp as a whole against the emperor in the Thirty Years War. "Diversity of religions," Richelieu is known to have said, "may create divisions in the next world, but not in this."

Throughout the nearly 20 years that Richelieu was chief minister, ceaseless attempts were made to eliminate him—by court intrigue, palace conspiracy, or revolt of grandes, who often sought to profit from the disaffection of the mass of the people bearing an insupportable burden of rapidly growing taxes. But in whatever form the cardinal's

enemies acted, they always turned their eyes to the Hapsburg powers, to Madrid or Vienna.

Throughout the latter half of the 1620s, the party of the *dévots*, supported by two queens, the mother (Marie de Médicis) and the wife (Anne of Austria) of Louis XIII, demanded that all resources should be concentrated on beating the Huguenots in France, and that any anti-Hapsburg actions abroad should be renounced. This programme created a convenient pretext—with references to the interests of the Catholic faith—to unite Richelieu's opponents, and to organise plots against the chief minister, whose power kept mounting. More, the *dévots* won the partial support of some important followers of the cardinal, such as the Capuchin monk Father Joseph, François Le Clerc du Tremblay, who was chief of the cardinal's secret service. Father Joseph even wrote an epic poem in Latin hexameter on the capture of the Huguenot fortress of La Rochelle in October 1628.

The successes of the Hapsburg camp heartened the *dévots*, who argued that it was dangerous for France to come to grips with the victorious Counter-Reformation. At times, doubts on that score also tormented Richelieu himself, for a consistently anti-Hapsburg policy proved far from easy to follow. Still, aid from the Hapsburg bloc was seen as essential by all of Richelieu's opponents if they wanted to succeed, and this conviction grew stronger with the successive failures of plots and revolts whenever such aid had not been forthcoming. The price of truly effective and extensive aid on the part of the emperor and the Spanish king was for France to break off relations with the anti-Hapsburg forces and, in one way or another, take the side of their enemies. In other words, the whole thing hinged not only on France renouncing the use of the ambient conflict in its own political interests, but also changing sides contrary to these interests.

The first of these conspiracies was headed by the French king's brother Gaston d'Orléans, in which Anne of Austria and the king's half-brothers, the dukes of Vendôme, participated. The plotters had obtained promises of support from Vienna and Mad-

rid. They intended to abduct Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu, and, in the event of this failing, to start an armed uprising. This plot is sometimes named after the Count de Chalais, a member of the distinguished French family of Talleyrand-Perigord, who took an active part in it.

To be sure, Chalais was a most ordinary personality, a tool in the hands of the Duchess de Chevreuse, an intriguer in the royal court. Richelieu's spies headed by Father Joseph, tracked down the threads of the conspiracy, gained possession of the letters in which the conspirators discussed plans of assassinating the cardinal, and indeed also Louis XIII, and those which Chalais received from Madrid and Brussels.

In the end, Gaston d'Orléans, a traitor by nature, betrayed his accomplices to save his own skin. Arrested, Chalais grovelled at Richelieu's feet pleading for mercy. But the cardinal would not bend: Chalais's punishment was intended to deter other dissidents, and the plotter was beheaded.

Abbot François Langlois di Fancan was, alongside Father Joseph, a leading figure in Richelieu's secret diplomacy in his early years in power. Each day, the cardinal spent hours conferring with Fancan who repeatedly acted as secret agent in various German states.

But while Father Joseph, chief of the cardinal's spies, urged Richelieu to arrange an alliance with the Pope, the abbot Fancan represented an entirely different school of political thought. He was getting bribes from the German Catholic princes but, despite this, insisted that France should back the German Protestants more resolutely than the cardinal saw fit. Subsequently, this difference between Richelieu and Fancan grew sharper. In 1627, the abbot, who defended the freedom of the French clergy from the power of Rome with excessive zeal, who urged the concordat between France and the Pope to be broken, and who had even made contacts with England, with certain German princes and with Huguenot leaders, ended up in the Bastille.

The organiser of the next conspiracy was Marie

de Médicis. Taking advantage of the king's illness, she and Anne of Austria, by tears and pleas, gained Louis XIII's promise to get rid of the cardinal. The queen-mother was sure of having won, and rudely showed him the door when he came to her palace. Court lickspittles began shifting from the cardinal's reception hall to that of the queen-mother. But that was premature. Louis XIII was well again, and, forgetting his promise, instantly summoned the cardinal, who once more became the country's all-powerful ruler. And that day, November 10, 1630, has, as a result, gone down in history as the Day of the Dupes (*La Journée des Dupes*). Many of the "duped" were expelled from the court, and Marie de Médicis, who made an abortive attempt at raising a mutiny in the fortress of Cappel, situated near Spanish-ruled Flanders, was expelled from the country.

The *Journée des Dupes* was a defeat for the party of the *dévots*. It also strongly reduced the chances of the Hapsburgs' military victory. Now, Richelieu was free to follow a conclusively anti-Hapsburg policy. Though, it is true, he was compelled to fight off other conspirators who, whatever their personal aims may have been, invariably advanced the goal of altering French foreign policy and making an alliance with the Hapsburg powers.

Gaston d'Orléans finally succeeded in starting a revolt in Lorraine. He concluded a secret agreement with Spain, which promised aid to Richelieu's opponents. To strike fear into the rebels, the cardinal had his tribunal pass a sentence of death on Maréchal de Marillac, who had sided with them. He was publicly executed on May 10, 1632.¹ The royal army entered Lorraine and crushed the rebel troops. One of the rebel leaders, Duke de Montmorency, was beheaded. Gaston d'Orléans "repented" again, betrayed his accomplices, tearfully swore eternal loyalty to the cardinal, and, after a while, again began to weave plots against him.

¹ Georges Mongrédiens, *La Journée des Dupes*, Gallimard, Paris, 1961, pp. 113-128.

Soon after Montmorency's execution, Richelieu himself fell into a trap, from which he escaped by the skin of his teeth. In early November 1632, parting with the king and his courtiers on the way to Toulouse, Richelieu, who had fallen ill, stopped over at the castle of Duke d'Epernon, governor of Guienne, a suspected accomplice in the conspiracy that had led to the assassination of Henry IV. Richelieu was accompanied by only a small group of courtiers, and the night passed in disquiet. Possibly, the cardinal was saved from death or imprisonment by the certainty of his companions that the sick man had only a few days more to live. In the morning, the cardinal hastily left for Bordeaux, but there, too, he was still in d'Epernon's power. The queen and the Duchess de Chevreuse, who were travelling with their courtiers and happened to be in Bordeaux, were looking forward to a triumph. They hastened to leave their bed-ridden enemy in the city, where d'Epernon would serve as the instrument of their revenge. Their accomplice, Chancellor Chateauneuf, a creature of the Duchess de Chevreuse, was already trying on the uniform of the king's chief minister. D'Epernon decided that if Richelieu did not succumb to his illness, he would keep him under guard at Trompette, an unassailable castle. One day, he came to Richelieu's house accompanied by 200 followers in order, as he put it, to pay his respects and inquire about the cardinal's health. So one did not have to be a Richelieu to guess his intentions.

All this was occurring at a tense moment in the Thirty Years War, when a decisive clash was in the offing between the army of Gustavus Adolphus, the Swedish king, and the emperor's armies under Wallenstein. On the outcome of that battle hung the future of Germany and, indeed, of Richelieu's foreign policy.

On November 13, Richelieu was operated upon, and was out of danger. Pierre de La Porte, the queen's majordomo, who had come to find out if the minister had at last given up the ghost, returned with the news that he was getting well. Now, d'Epernon was the queen's only hope. But on December 20,

a few men of Richelieu's retinue carried a sort of matress covered with a silk carpet out of the house where the cardinal was staying. Under the carpet lay Richelieu, who was delivered on board a vessel which instantly raised sail.

The Montmorency plot was followed by the conspiracy of the queen's confidante, the Duchess de Chevreuse, and Chancellor Chateauneuf, who had the backing of Anne of Austria, Prince Gaston d'Orléans and other enemies of the cardinal. Richelieu's spies got wind of this conspiracy as well. Chateauneuf was packed off to the prison in Angoulême in 1633, and languished there for ten years. The Duchess of Chevreuse was banished to her Château de Dampierre near Paris, but made secret night-time visits to the Louvre to confer with Anne of Austria. Learning of this, Richelieu had the untiring intriguer carted off to the sombre castle of Couzières in Touraine. A steady stream of letters poured from the castle to Anne of Austria, to the English queen, the sister of Louis XIII, to the Spanish court, and to Charles, Duke of Lorraine. The duchess listed the 80-year-old Archbishop of Tours among her admirers, along with the young Prince de Marsillac, future Duke of La Rochefoucauld, author of the famous *Réflexions ou Sentences et Maximes Morales*. The cardinal's spies, indeed, were busy day and night, watching these and other admirers of the duchess. One such admirer, de Jars, connected with the English court, was seized, tortured, and sentenced to death, then pardoned when he had already been brought to the scaffold.

In the early half of 1634, Gaston d'Orléans concluded a secret treaty with Madrid, promising that in the event of a Franco-Spanish war he would take part in it on the side of the august Austrian house (i.e., the Hapsburg powers), using subsidy he would then be granted to recruit an army for action against France. The text of the treaty was despatched to Madrid aboard a Spanish ship which, pursued by Dutch ships, ran aground near the French shore. The governor of Calais took charge of the documents aboard the vessel and sent them to Richelieu, who

now obtained proof of the French dauphin's treason. But since the matter concerned Gaston d'Orléans, the heir apparent of Louis XIII, Richelieu could not punish him and tried to win him over with large cash handouts.

In Madrid, meanwhile, they remembered at last that they had twice already simply eliminated enemies of the faith and of the Spanish crown by having them assassinated—Admiral Coligny during the St Bartholomew's Massacre in 1572 and Henry IV in 1610. The hand of God, like the hand of the assassin, was backed by behind-the-scenes intrigues of the Spanish secret service. One assassin had been prevented from killing the cardinal at the last moment. Another inquired from a Dominican friar in vague and cautious terms whether assassinating the chief minister would please heaven, and (unlike Ravaillac) received a negative reply.

Marie de Médicis, who was in Flanders, tried to incite fresh civil strife in France. Indeed, war was knocking at France's door. But Richelieu was waiting, reluctant to become involved in a conflict at an unfavourable moment. He told Jules Mazarin (who already enjoyed his trust at that time) that he was courting peace as he would a sweetheart. When, owing to the behaviour of the Vienna court, war became inevitable, Mazarin wrote in March 1635 that Richelieu "wept and protested that he would give his hand to have peace".¹

In 1635, an open break occurred between France and Spain. Imperial troops under Piccolomini and other battle-hardened generals moved against Paris. On August 5, the imperials crossed the Somme. The hastily retreating French army was under the command of Louis de Bourbon, Count de Soissons, whose loyalty, as the events showed, could not be trusted. He conducted secret negotiations with the Spanish and Marie de Médicis.

Several important fortresses were treacherously surrendered to the imperials practically without a

¹ Philippe Erlanger, *Richelieu. Le dictateur*, Librairie académique Perrin, Paris, 1970, p. 62.

fight. It looked as though France was again in danger of becoming a Hapsburg vassal, as after the Battle at Pavia in 1525, the defeat at Saint Canten in 1557, and during the religious wars. So it had to make peace with some of its enemies, particularly Gaston d'Orléans.

Meanwhile, a militia was being hastily formed in Paris, and fortifications were being thrown up at crash rates round the capital. Royal troops, headed by Louis XIII and Richelieu, besieged the important fortress of Corbie, which had been captured by the enemy. Now, sure of impunity, Gaston d'Orléans, along with the Count of Soissons, came to terms with the Spanish that they would lift the siege and assassinate the cardinal. Evidently, this time the cardinal's spies had no advance information of the plot. It failed, however, for the simple reason that, as usual, Gaston d'Orléans got cold feet and failed to give the agreed sign to the assassins. Soon, Richelieu obtained full information about the plot, and both Gaston d'Orléans and Count de Soissons, learning that their plan had been discovered, fled hastily abroad.

There was still Anne of Austria, a bitter opponent of the cardinal's foreign policy, who secretly corresponded with Madrid and Vienna. Richelieu's spies watched the queen's every move. Following the siege of Corbie, they seized a pile of letters in Anne's hand to the Duchess de Chevreuse. Among the spies in Anne's retinue, a special role was assigned to Mme de Lannoy. But the queen still had devoted servants—the equerry Putange and majordomo La Porte, who had been trained by the Duchess de Chevreuse to evade the traps laid by the cardinal's men.

Time and again, Richelieu tried to charm Anne of Austria and the Duchess de Chevreuse as he had once, years ago, charmed Marie de Médicis. But the experiment, performed this time nearly two dozen years later, failed dismally.

In the summer of 1637, Richelieu's secret service managed to seize a letter of the former Spanish ambassador to France, Marquis de Mirabel, which was a reply to a letter of the queen—probably through

the courtesan Mlle de Chémerault known as the "wanton beauty". What Richelieu's spies failed in, however, was to intercept Anne of Austria's reply to the Spaniard's letter. Still, they established that La Porte played the main part in the traffic of messages to and from the queen.

Fearing that Anne of Austria would destroy all compromising papers, the cardinal obtained Louis XIII's permission to search the queen's apartments in the Abbey of Saint-Etienne. On August 13, archbishop of Paris and chancellor Seguier, whom Richelieu sent there, discovered nothing but meaningless letters. The day before, La Porte had been taken to the Bastille, where he was thrown into a cell that had been occupied by the alchemist Noel Dubois, who had for a number of years fooled the chief minister with promises of producing gold out of non-precious metals. On La Porte was found the queen's note to the Duchess de Chevreuse: "The bearer of this letter will tell you of other news that I could not trust to paper." That day, Seguier made a thorough search in La Porte's room at the Chevreuse residence. But what he was looking for escaped his notice: a cache in the wall with the most important papers and keys to the coded note, hidden beneath a gypsum mask.

Anne of Austria maintained that in her letter to Mirabel and other persons in Madrid she had conveyed her familial affections and inquired about the health of the Spanish royal family. She pretended full reconciliation with the despised cardinal and it seemed to her that she had succeeded in impressing this upon him, while, in fact, his acceptance of her reassurances was due to political necessity rather than Anne's irresistible charms. To consolidate the absolute monarchy or, in other words, to assure the triumph of Richelieu's policy, it had been especially important for Louis XIII to have an heir. Richelieu knew full well that he would not get Rome's consent to the king's divorce, so only Anne of Austria could mother a dauphin.

"I wish," wrote Louis XIII on Richelieu's urging, "that Mme de Sennecé [a lady-in-waiting—Y.Ch.] should account to me for all the letters the queen

sends which are sealed in her presence. I also wish that Filandre, the queen's first maid-of-honour, should let me know of all the times when the queen writes anything, since it is impossible for her not to know it as the person in charge of the queen's writing set." Beneath this document the queen made the following inscription, "I promise the king to religiously observe the contents of the above."¹ It was a promise she did not keep.

On August 21, 1637, in his palace Richelieu personally interrogated La Porte: the latter said he would give evidence if the queen ordered him. Louis XIII instructed his wife to command La Porte in writing to state everything he knew. He warned that otherwise her majordomo would be tortured. The deeply disturbed queen hastened to make some additional admissions: yes, she had given La Porte a code for communicating with Mirabel, had received the disguised Duchess de Chevreuse, but all the correspondence was utterly innocent in nature. She was told to instruct La Porte in writing to reveal all her secrets. The question remained, however, whether La Porte would believe the queen's instructions. At that time, he was being interrogated by the abominable Laffemas, better known as the cardinal's butcher.

Marie de Hautefort, who was at once the queen's lady-in-waiting and the king's mistress, disguised in man's clothing, reached one of the prisoners of the Bastille, a bitter enemy of the cardinal, le chevalier de Jars of whom we already know. The latter managed to knock a hole in the wall of La Porte's cell and passed on the queen's instructions. When Laffemas showed him the queen's written instructions, La Porte, an artful pretender, at first made out that he doubted whether his mistress wished him to open all the cards; then, as though giving way to the threats of the cardinal's hangman, he offered testimony which coincided entirely with what Anne of Austria had earlier admitted.

¹ Pierre-Georges Lorris, *La Fronde*, Editions Albin Michel, Paris, 1961, p. 15.

Mlle de Hautefort sent the Duchess de Chevreuse a messenger to inform her of the successful culmination of the queen's ruse. But in her haste, she sent a breviary in red binding—a sign of danger—instead of one bound in green velvet. On receiving the wrong breviary, the Duchess de Chevreuse donned a man's garb and fled to Spain.

The father confessor of Louis XIII, Jesuit Caussin, intrigued assiduously with the help of the pious Louise de La Fayette, the king's mistress, against Cardinal Richelieu. In his attempts to turn the king against the cardinal, Caussin reminded him of the 6,000 church buildings gutted in Germany by Protestants, whom Richelieu had made allies of France. Again and again, the cardinal had to prove to Louis XIII that the treaties with the Protestant princes should not be condemned, because they were directed against the Hapsburg powers which menaced the survival of France as an independent state. Besides, the cardinal always added, the treaties allowed Catholics freedom of worship in all territories controlled by Protestants.

In December 1637, aided by Louise de La Fayette, Caussin handed the king a letter from Marie de Médicis, who resided abroad. Two hours later, the cardinal learnt about it and succeeded in delivering a counter-blow. The following day, the king let Caussin know he no longer needed his services. Soon thereafter, Caussin was expelled from the capital, and all his papers were placed under arrest.

In 1637 a revolt was started by Count de Soissons and Duke de Bouillon, commander of Sedan fortress. As in previous cases, the conspirators received aid from the Spanish king and German emperor. Seven thousand imperial soldiers joined the rebel army. As a result, the royal troops were defeated at Mars. But in 1641, Count de Soissons, organiser of the conspiracy, fell at the hands of an unknown assassin. And after his death, Duke de Bouillon preferred coming to terms with Richelieu, while the other plotters escaped abroad.

That same year, however, a still more dangerous conspiracy, all but joined by Louis himself, began

taking shape. One of the royal favourites, Marquis de Cinq-Mars, son of Richelieu's close follower Maréchal Effiat, was at the heart of this new plot which again involved the ubiquitous Gaston d'Orléans, Duke de Bouillon and, most probably, Anne of Austria.

The conspirators signed a secret treaty with Count Olivares, the prime minister of Spain, under which a Spanish force was to attack France from the north of Flanders; Duke de Bouillon would surrender Sedan to them, and thus impede the French army's advance to Catalonia.

By that time, the followers of the Hapsburgs had lost all hope of winning with resort to arms. "All that remains," the Spanish governor of the Southern Netherlands wrote in 1641, "is to enlist followers in France and to try and prompt the government in Paris through them to be more reasonable."¹ In many ways, the further course of the Thirty Years War depended on the success or failure of that new conspiracy.

Cinq-Mars's most adroit agent was his friend, Vicomte de Fontrailles, a hunchback. It was he, disguised as a Capuchin friar, who went to Madrid for talks with Olivares and for signing the treaty. Richelieu had known from his spies, who had trailed Fontrailles up to the border, that an unknown French conspirator had travelled to the Spanish capital, but, evidently, he had not yet learned about the conspiracy in detail. Upon returning to Paris, Fontrailles had the impertinence of appearing at court several times, and even in the cardinal's apartments, while dangerous papers were hidden in the lining of his coat.

Yet forwarding copies of the treaty to conspirators in different localities, proved exceedingly difficult. Richelieu's spies were everywhere. Cinq-Mars suspected a certain abbot La Rivière, a trusted adviser of Gaston d'Orléans, of spying for the cardinal. And with good reason, for La Rivière was Richelieu's agent.

¹ Philippe Erlanger, *Richelieu...*, p. 271.

While copies of the treaty with Spain were being dispatched, a copy fell into the cardinal's hands! Many versions of where Richelieu got it from were circulated at that time and later. Some named the Duchess de Chevreuse, who was then in Brussels, as the source of the information. If so, she gained nothing from betraying her accomplices. Richelieu did not moderate his opinion of her, and in his political testament referred to her with obvious scorn. Some thought the cardinal had learned of the treaty from intercepted letters of the Spanish governor of the Southern Netherlands. Still others held that a copy of the treaty was found aboard a ship that had run aground in a storm in the vicinity of Perpignan.

It should also be remembered that from 1636 on, Richelieu had an important agent in Madrid, a baron of Provence who had participated in previous plots against him. The extant correspondence contains hints that, evidently, he had provided word of the treaty. Certain historians believe the conspirators may have been betrayed by Olivares himself in exchange for something he had wanted from Richelieu. If this is true, Olivares probably forwarded a copy of the treaty to the cardinal through the latter's brother-in-law, de Brézé, French commander in Catalonia. But there are many points that go against this hypothesis. The traitor could well have been Gaston d'Orléans. And Anne of Austria, too, for she had a friend and lover in Cardinal Jules Mazarin, Richelieu's closest adviser, and eventually his successor as chief minister of France. That riddle is still unsolved.

The conspirators hoped that the hidden dislike which, they held, Louis XIII had for his minister, would help them achieve their aim. But the extant correspondence between king and cardinal speaks of their very close cooperation. This proves that the outward signs of disaffection, even jealousy, displayed by the king towards Richelieu were really a pretence at which Louis XIII showed considerable skill. This suggested to many of his contemporaries and their opinions are reflected in La Rochefoucauld's famous *Le Mémoires sur la Régence d'Anne*

d'Autriche that the king hated his much too incisive and infallible minister.

Upon receiving the text of the treaty, the gravely sick Richelieu sent it to Louis XIII, and the king at once agreed to have Cinq-Mars arrested. Neither the queen nor Gaston d'Orléans could be touched, while the Duke of Bouillon was saved by his wife. She let Richelieu know that if her husband were executed, she would surrender Sedan to the Spanish. So the duke was pardoned, but paid for this by renouncing the command of Sedan fortress. As for Cinq-Mars, he was executed on September 12, 1642, at the age of twenty-two. His best friend De Thou shared his fate, though he had no part in the conspiracy but had known about it and had not reported it to the cardinal. Fontrailles managed to escape abroad.

The conspiracies against Richelieu were, in effect, aimed at reversing French foreign policy in favour of Madrid and Vienna. Their failure meant victory for the policy of supporting the opponents of the Hapsburg camp. A quotation from Richelieu on this score said: "How far Gaul extended, that far should France reach."¹ This was an idea that dated back to the times of Henry IV. In *La Géographie*, published in France from 1593 to 1643, it was argued that France should have the same borders as ancient Gaul. Later, this idea evolutionised into the idea of natural borders—along the larger rivers, mountain ranges, and the seacoast. The idea of natural borders was seized upon by Marshal Sébastien Vauban, an eminent French military engineer, who regarded it as an argument against the endless plans of conquest. In a treatise he wrote somewhere around 1700, Vauban declared that the most ambitious French claims go no farther than the peaks of the Alps and Pyrenees, Switzerland and the two seas. Natural borders, a term that had not yet come into circulation in the 17th century, were also justified in debates by references to language borders (such argu-

¹ See Sydney Seymour Biro, *The German Policy of Revolutionary France, 1792-1797*, Vol. I, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1957, p. 1.

ments are found to have been made by Henry IV, and repeated by his grandson, Louis XIV). Whenever the "natural frontier" that stretched far beyond the border of the French language, the Rhine had to be justified, its devotees referred to such ancient authors as Caesar and Strabo, who named that river as Gaul's border.¹

The French publicists of Richelieu's time held that France should be arbiter for all other European powers, notably the German princes and the emperor, in order to counteract Spanish hegemonic plans.² These plans were counterweighed by the demand of maintaining a power balance. The priority of state interests was assiduously promoted. Take the works of Henri de Rohan, an active participant in the political struggles of the early years of Richelieu's rule. He, a Protestant, was initially opposed to the cardinal. But after the fall of La Rochelle, he sided with the all-powerful minister and became an ardent promoter of his foreign policy. Rohan was Richelieu's agent in Venice and in other countries, then again fell out with the cardinal and, joining the army of Bernard von Weimar, was fatally wounded in a battle in 1638. Rohan had written a number of books and treatises on political and military issues. In a treatise, *De l'intérêt des princes et Etats de la chrétienté*, which he dedicated to Richelieu, Rohan stressed that state interests should govern a sovereign's actions and therefore imposed upon him concern for maintaining the power balance in Europe.

Taking the example of Spain, Rohan examined the use of religion as an instrument of foreign policy and a pretext for plans of conquest. Spanish diplomacy, he maintained, had succeeded in convincing the Pope and the Italian princes that Philip II was a defender of the faith. Spain tried also to use the French Protestants against the king and the English Catholics against that country's Protestant royalty.

¹ Roger Dion, *Les frontières de la France*, Hachette, Paris, 1947, p. 92.

² Etienne Thieu, *Raison d'état et pensée politique à l'époque de Richelieu*, Les Presses de l'Institut français d'Athènes, Athènes, 1966, pp. 309-310.

It was its geographic situation that shaped the policy of France: it was called upon to place a barrier for the Spanish avalanche and, at the same time, to convince the Pope that a balance of power was the sole possible guarantee of his independence. A treatise, *La guerre libre*, was published in French in The Hague in 1641, proving that Catholic mercenaries fighting on the side of sovereigns warring against Catholic monarchs, acted lawfully. State interests could prompt similar action by whole states.

Richelieu died soon after the Cinq-Mars conspiracy had been discovered in December 1642. Learning of the cardinal's death, Pope Urban VIII exclaimed: 'If God exists, he will pay. If God does not exist, bravo!'¹ To be sure, it had seemed "bravo" for the Hapsburg powers. But this only on the surface.

Retribution

It could be presumed that Spain's military setbacks would bring home to its government that its aims were impracticable. Not only Philip II, however, but also his successor Philip III (1598-1621), was incapable of conceiving the obvious fact that the process leading to the emergence of an independent Dutch republic was irreversible, though some of his more far-sighted advisers had gradually come to realise this.

The continuous interference of the Spanish government in the internecine strife and civil wars in France and other countries generated a reciprocal striving of handcuffing Madrid, and drawing it into an armed struggle against Holland, then Protestantism's main force in the ambient conflict. In so doing, the diplomacies of the countries concerned circulated misinformation that was meant to convince the Spaniards that the Dutch were enfeebled by strife between those who were for and against war. Spain was thus

¹ Michel Carmona, *Richelieu. L'ambition et le pouvoir*, Fayard, Paris, 1983, p. 697.

becoming involved in a war for which, quite obviously, it was no match. In April 1619, Don Baltasar de Zuñiga, chief policy adviser of Philip III, wrote: "We cannot, by force of arms, reduce those provinces to their former obedience... To promise ourselves that we can conquer the Dutch is to seek the impossible, to delude ourselves."¹

The 12-year-old armistice between Spain and Holland ended in the spring of 1621. The Spanish government and its governors in Brussels hesitated, then decided not to renew it. The Spanish authorities, *even for themselves*, motivated their obviously aggressive mood by purely defensive reasons—the need for ending Dutch attacks on the Crown's possessions overseas, and the fact that the republic had exploited the armistice to expand its commerce.

If the war was not renewed, its Spanish advocates maintained, the colonies in the New World would be lost one after another, then Flanders, then the possessions in Italy, and finally Spain's own turn would come. These arguments tended to outweigh the view that Spanish finances could not meet the cost of a war.

In the course of the Thirty Years War, Madrid no longer aimed at any complete subjugation of the Northern Netherlands. All it wanted, to quote Olivares, head of the Spanish government, was to bend the Dutch towards "friendship" with Spain, that is, to deal in a manner fitting the Spanish interests in the southern part of the Netherlands, in the question of the New World colonies, and so on; at the same time, the Spanish government was reluctant to renounce claims to supreme power over provinces that, in fact, it had already lost forever.

Back in August 1574, Philip II permitted negotiations with the rebels, but said no concessions whatever should be made on two issues: the position of the Catholic Church and the prerogatives of the monarch. More than half a century later, in 1628, Olivares, the Spanish prime minister, reduced Spain's

¹ Geoffrey Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1977, p. 264.

main war aims to these very same points. Insisting on them, Spain held that any display of weakness would undermine its prestige as a great power and would even tend to spread heresy in its other possessions. The aggressive Castile nationalism was one of the motivations of Olivares's policy during the reign of Philip IV.

For Holland, too, the resumption of the war in 1621 was connected with considerable economic losses, to say nothing of the cost of the war itself. Up to two-fifths of Holland's maritime trade was linked with the possessions of Spain (including the annexed Portuguese colonies). War meant damage to shipping and fishery. In April 1621, Dutch merchants were expelled from Spain and Italy. This Spanish move was aimed at creating stagnation in Dutch trade, and did, indeed, initially lead to such a result. The war, despite certain victories, meant losses rather than profits for Holland economically, at least until the end of the 1620s.

For Spain, the war against the Dutch republic was increasingly unsuccessful, and this not only in the Southern Netherlands. In addition to the armies that operated in various parts of Europe, Madrid was now compelled to maintain troops along the Spanish coast to protect it from Dutch raids. And the cost of such coastal defences and of the local militia was one more heavy burden for the treasury to bear.

In the early half of the 16th century, the Netherlands conducted successful military operations in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies in America and Southeast Asia. In 1621, the Dutch West India Company was formed for contraband trade and plunder of Spanish possessions. In 1628, the Dutch captured a Spanish fleet carrying silver from the New World. Already by 1636, they had seized 547 Spanish vessels. Matters came to a point where transporting reinforcements and money for the Spanish army in the Netherlands was safe only aboard neutral English ships, and this exclusively if secrecy was strictly observed. Gold and silver to pay the Spanish mercenaries and to cover other military expenditures

was, after 1632, secretly delivered to England, where coins were minted. In return, London despatched promissory notes subject to payment in the Netherlands. Finally, Madrid tried to break the Dutch blockade by gathering all available warships. On October 21, 1639, this new Spanish armada was smashed near Dover by Dutch Admiral Maarten Tromp. Spain was thus deprived of its once powerful Atlantic fleet for good.

Objectively, the ongoing ambient conflict—as far as the Spanish-Dutch war was concerned—was then being used by the proto-capitalist Netherlands to undermine the colonial monopoly of feudal Spain and, to seize its overseas possessions. Some Dutch Calvinist merchants did a brisk trade with the enemy, and, among other things, financed the emperor's army under Wallenstain. Neither could Spain wage the war without buying food from the Dutch. And Holland would hardly be able to pay the cost of the war without the profits it made on trading with the enemy.

The logic of things proved stronger than the logic of men. A country's association with one camp or the other predetermined the policy of statesmen, sometimes contrary to their intentions, and the main thing, it predetermined the results of that policy. Historians have been prone to compare Richelieu and Olivares, whom they described as the Spanish Richelieu. In 1628 and 1629 Richelieu prevailed upon the king that the struggle against the domination of the Hapsburgs in Europe should have precedence over any plans of domestic reform and restriction of taxes. Olivares, on the other hand, wrote that the main effort should go into improving Spain's economic condition, while outside its borders defence, not offensive operations, was more desirable. Richelieu did fulfil his programme, while Olivares operated contrary to his long-term plans. The policy of the two statesmen resulted in a tremendous growth of fiscal oppression and massive popular uprisings against the two governments. But this is where the similarities stopped. The results of the activity of Richelieu and Olivares were different, due complete-

ly to which of the two camps France and Spain belonged to in the ambient conflict.

Richelieu's policy was directed to an objectively pertinent and progressive aim: to defeat the ideas of a universal Hapsburg empire. The policy of Olivares, on the other hand, amounted in the final analysis to a mobilisation of all the remaining resources and forces in already exhausted Spain to achieve a hegemonic aim contrary to the basic interests of the peoples of Europe and the laws governing the progressive development of society. The result was that France began playing a leading role in Europe in the latter half of the 17th century, while the role of Spain declined.

In 1640, Portugal detached itself from Spain. In January 1641, the Catalonians declared themselves subjects of the King of France. The Spanish government could not reconcile itself to losing Catalonia. The endless war continued, but its prime mover, the Duke Olivares, an object of universal hate, was sent into exile, where he lost his mind over the series of failures that befell him, and soon died.

For 80 years (since the late 1560s) Spain had striven to regain its hold on the Netherlands, until in 1648 it was finally compelled to admit defeat. The fact that Spain, suffering from war fatigue, managed to withdraw from the war and retain Belgium was due to a number of extraneous circumstances. One of these was that Prince of Orange-Nassau, head of the Netherlands, wished peace in order to have a free hand to aid his relative, King Charles I of England, who was suffering defeat in the war against the army of Parliament. (The other reasons will be discussed below in another context).

After Portugal's secession in 1640, the Spanish government had for more than a quarter of a century tried in vain to regain control over it, and did not renounce the senseless struggle until 1668. It barely managed to suppress popular uprisings in Catalonia, Naples and Sicily at the end of the 1640s. Some of the territories that Spain had in Europe it was compelled to concede to the French, while part of those in the Caribbean fell into English hands.

Only 28 years in the 17th century had, for Spain, been free of wars. After 1620 signs of Spain's economic decline and exhaustion multiplied from decade to decade. Insufferable taxes depressed industry and agriculture. The peasants were running to ruin, the production of wool declined (and it was Spain's main export commodity), while the country's merchant fleet and navy retained only a shadow of their past power.

Smuggling was universal, reducing treasury revenues. Inflation was an additional heavy burden for peasants, artisans and traders to cope with. The population declined. And the economic stagnation in the colonies was appalling. By 1660, shipments of silver from the New World amounted to just one-tenth of the 1595 amounts. Whatever was left of the foreign trade of the colonies was falling increasingly into the hands of Dutch and English merchant smugglers. Jesuit control over the educational system, too, bore bitter fruit. The Spanish universities that were once renowned in Europe either lost their former significance, or were closed, giving place to Jesuit colleges and seminaries, as was the case in Seville, Valencia, and Alcala de Henares. In the famous University of Salamanca, which had something like 8,000 students in 1535, one professor noted the complete ignorance of students a hundred years later. The decline of culture was increasingly visible, and matched the growing economic decline.¹

Within the lifetime of one generation, during the reign of Charles II (1665-1700), Spain lost its status of a great power, while this last of the Hapsburgs on the Spanish throne—a mentally retarded, sickly freak prone to fits of moronic indifference or prey to wild fantasies, seemed, in a way, to symbolise the degradation of the Spanish state.

‘While other nations were putting away childish

¹ The general decline of Spain should not be placed in doubt by the fact that after 1680, as the latest research shows, there were signs of economic and cultural revival in some parts of Castile, in Catalonia and the Basque country. Yet this revival, too, became possible only some decades after the conclusion of the ambient conflict.

things," wrote English liberal historian Thomas Macaulay, "the Spaniard still thought as a child and understood as a child. Among the men of the seventeenth century, he was the man of the fifteenth century or of a still darker period, delighted to behold an *auto da fé*, and ready to volunteer on a Crusade."¹

At the end of the reign of childless King Charles II, Spain, which still possessed a vast colonial empire, became an object of struggle among the powers. The death of Charles in 1700 led to the War of the Spanish Succession.

But what was the state and condition of that other buttress of the Counter-Reformation, the Austrian Hapsburgs?

An Endless Epilogue

In the early 17th century, as we may recall, a pause ensued in the European conflict. For a few more years, however, the Dutch republic still warred with Spain, and the struggle of the Hapsburgs and their ally Poland against the Ottoman Empire would burst into flame one day and die down the next. The struggle continued, too, for the Baltic seaboard, for which the Catholic camp had its own, far-reaching plans directed against Protestant Sweden, Denmark, and the North German principalities. The Russian state, which had failed to reclaim its historical lands on the Baltic shore as a result of the Livonian war, became a target of initially covert but then also overt armed intervention by Poland, which was a member of the Catholic camp and eager to place its own protégé on the Moscow throne.

On the eve of the Thirty Years War there had been several main knots of conflict in Europe. First, in the framework of the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation between the emperor and the Protestant states initially backed by England and then by other powers (Denmark, Sweden and France). Second,

¹ Thomas Macaulay, *Critical and Historical Essays*, Vol. II, J. M. Dent & Sons, London, 1961, p. 81.

between Spain and Holland. Third, between France and the Hapsburg powers, notably Spain, whose possessions ringed French territory on all sides (Spain, Northern Italy, parts of the Rhineland and, lastly, the Southern Netherlands). Fourth, between Sweden and Poland. Fifth, between Poland and Russia which was eager to reclaim Russian lands lost at the time of the peasant war and the foreign intervention in the early 17th century. Sixth, between the Ottoman Empire and a number of European powers belonging to diverse political blocs—the Hapsburg powers, Poland, and Russia.

Only two of these combinations were part of the ambient conflict between Protestantism and the Counter-Reformation. But the rest, like other more local ones in nature (British support of the French Huguenots until 1628, the clash between Sweden and Denmark, the collisions between Rome and other Italian states, as well as with Spain and France, etc.) were drawn into its orbit in one way or another, and exercised a strong influence on its progress and outcome.

After the disintegration of the empire of Charles V, the Hapsburg camp had acquired two centres—Madrid and Vienna (by the mid-16th century). In the earlier half of the century, the main battlefield against the Reformation was the Holy Roman Empire itself, but in the decades that followed the hostilities shifted chiefly to the Netherlands and France, and the Atlantic seaboard, where England was the antagonist of the Catholic camp. That war was fought by Spain in the name of the Catholic Counter-Reformation.

The wars of the early half of the century made inroads into the resources chiefly of the German branch of the Counter-Reformation, whereas those of the latter half exhausted the resources of Spain. The relation of power within the Catholic camp changed accordingly: the weight of the Vienna court began to exceed that of Madrid. The Austrian Hapsburgs, whose hereditary possessions and whose empire as such were never a venue of battles in the latter half of the 16th century, were able to profit from the economic rehabilitation of Central Europe.

For Germany, the end of the 16th and the early 17th century was a time of economic uplift (though highly nonuniform from region to region). Metal processing increased visibly, farming methods improved, the textile industry grew by leaps and bounds, and new banks were founded both in the north and the south of the country.

Madrid, on the other hand, tried to make up for the exhaustion of Spanish resources by a closer relationship with Vienna, so that the Hapsburg powers would operate as one whole. For a long time, the Spanish overtures created no special interest in Vienna despite the close familial ties of the royal houses. In the early 17th century, however, a change of heart occurred. The Austrian Hapsburgs began to think that the international situation was favourable for them to seek a revival of the power that had been Charles V's.

Among the favourable circumstances espied by the Austrian Hapsburgs was the deterioration of the international positions of the Moscow State during the peasant war and the foreign intervention. This made it possible for the Austrians to enlist Poland more extensively on their side in Central Europe. The other favourable fact was that the Porte, busy fighting Persia, had for a time relaxed its pressure on Austria and in 1606 went so far as to conclude a 20-year armistice.

Apart from familial ties, the unity of the main Catholic forces reposited on the sameness of the basic interests of the Spanish and Austrian branches of the house of Hapsburg. The Austrian court could not hope to attain its imperial plans without the aid of the Spanish, while Madrid had to have alliance with the emperor to retain its hold on the Southern Netherlands.

After losing its control over the Atlantic, especially since the defeat of the Armada, Madrid had only one way left of shipping troops to the Netherlands—first by sea to the Spanish possessions in Northern Italy, then across the Swiss Alps and further along the Rhine and the Rhenish lands that were part of the empire. This Spanish Route, as it was known to contemporaries, could not be maintained without Austrian aid.

In the bid to assert their power in the Holy Roman Empire, the Hapsburgs were least of all concerned—either subjectively or objectively—with the idea of unifying Germany. On the contrary, it was their purpose to perpetuate the fragmentation of Germany (with the princes remaining vassals of the emperor) and use the resources of the empire as a whole to further their plans of a universal Catholic monarchy.

In the beginning of the 17th century, after a specific phase of the ambient conflict was over, its centre again began to shift to Germany.

When the Peace of Augsburg was concluded in 1555, there had as yet been no Calvinist princes. It did not, therefore, provide for the rights of the Calvinist segment of the population. The numerical superiority that Catholics had in the Imperial Diet and Tribunal left the Protestants—both Lutherans and Calvinists—no hope that these institutions would bother to protect the interests of those who sided with the Reformation.

In 1617, most of the Protestant principalities festively observed the hundredth anniversary of the Reformation. It would seem that these hundred years were quite enough proof that it was useless—above all for the camp of the Counter-Reformation—to continue the ambient conflict. But its main protagonists turned a blind eye to the experience of history or tried to draw false conclusions from it.

In 1607, Maximilian I, Duke and Elector of Bavaria, one of the mainstays of the Catholic camp, moved his troops into the Protestant town of Donauwörth. In retaliation, most of the Lutheran and Calvinist principalities formed the Evangelical (Protestant) Union, headed by the elector of Palatinat and the elector of Saxony. In 1609, the Catholic princes formed the Catholic League, headed by the elector of Bavaria.

The League, which drew strength from the emperor, Spain, and the Pope, had obviously aggressive designs vis-à-vis its Protestant neighbours. War, which would doubtless have grown to all-European proportions, seemed inevitable. In fact, however, it was delayed for nearly a decade, since the Catholic camp did

not feel prepared for a decisive clash and preferred to settle some of the secondary issues by peaceful means. More, the Hapsburgs made concessions to Protestants in their hereditary possessions, declaring freedom of conscience in Austria, Bohemia, and other lands, but, as it developed, for a short time only.

In the morning of May 23, 1618, the Catholic members of the Regents' Council of Bohemia gathered after Mass in the royal chancellory of the Hradchin Castle in Prague. Suddenly, some 200 armed men, the Protestant deputies of the Estates of Bohemia and their servants, crashed into the chamber. A furious argument ensued, the royal governors (regents) being accused of ordering the dissolution of the assembly, of being enemies of religion, and foes of the freedom of the kingdom. The verbal contest ended in that two of the more detested governors and their secretary were dragged to the high windows, through which they were flung from a height of some 20 metres. Fortunately, they landed in a garbage pit. This softened the impact, and, escaping the bullets fired after them, they clambered out and fled for safety. The palace garbage pit was not yet the garbage pit of history.

This farcical defenestration in Prague raised the curtain on one of the bloodiest dramas in European history—the Thirty Years War. The event attracted the attention of all European capitals. The war of liberation fought by the Czechs against the emperor became an event that directly or indirectly affected the vital interests of all the European nations.

The new stage in the ambient conflict opened with a counter-revolutionary intervention in which the Catholic camp scored some successes. Not because it was strong but because a certain segment of the progressive camp was intrinsically weak. The nobility that headed the Czech national movement surrendered after the rebels were defeated in the Battle of the White Hill. Bohemia was occupied by the emperor's armies, while Spanish troops over-ran the Palatinate, one more mainstay of the Protestants. In 1623, Calvinist preachers were driven out of the Rhenish provinces seized by the troops of the emperor and his allies.

Under an imperial edict of March 6, 1629, all church properties acquired by Protestants in Germany since 1552 were to be returned to their previous owners. This meant a final eradication of Protestantism both in the Calvinist and the Lutheran principalities irrespective of their ever having resorted to arms or having remained neutral.

The victories of the Catholic League, however, also caused resistance to grow. Masses of people rose up. Large-scale peasant revolts erupted. Within the Catholic camp, serious friction occurred between the Habsburgs and the Bavarian house of Wittelsbach, their chief ally.

Meanwhile, the impending victory of the Catholic League caused other European countries to intervene. Richelieu succeeded in embroiling Protestant Denmark in the war. Its Danish period dragged out from 1625 to 1629. In 1630, Sweden became involved in the war. Its Swedish period lasted until 1635, whereupon it entered its fourth and last period with France and Holland taking an immediate part in hostilities against the Catholic League.

The Swedish King, Gustavus Adolphus said:

"All the wars that are afoot in Europe have become one war."¹

Spain's war against the Netherlands and the Thirty Years War that later merged with it, is sometimes not unreasonably described as the first world war in history, for its battles occurred in Europe and America, Africa and Asia.

In the first stage of the ambient conflict, the army of Charles V was the first to apply important military inventions. In the second stage, Spain visibly outstripped its adversaries in the standard of organising, recruiting and training its troops. In the third stage, however, the situation changed radically. Naval advances were made nearly exclusively by Holland and England, both of them Protestant states. Use by infantry of the lighter and easier to handle musket, the greater mobility of the cavalry after most of the protective armour was discarded, and the appearance of

¹ Geoffrey Parker, *Europe in Crisis. 1598-1648*, p. 14.

cast-iron guns that a mere pair of horses could draw from place to place and that could fire six shots in the time it took musketeers to fire twice, coupled with appropriate changes in tactics—all this resulted from reforms carried out by King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden. Mind you, it was no accident that the conservative camp lost its former organisational and technical superiority in martial affairs. It reflected, this time in the military field, the increasingly distinct advantages of the new capitalist mode of production over the feudal.

The Hapsburg bloc was as a whole bound to find itself—and did find itself—without any significant and sufficiently faithful allies. Even the sympathies of Pope Urban VIII (1623-1644) were obviously with the anti-Hapsburg group of powers. And that, too, was no accidental fact, because the aims of the Hapsburgs were contrary to those of their opponents in the ambient conflicts and even to those of their possible allies.

Nothing but extreme want and a truly exceptional set of unfavourable circumstances could motivate any country to strike up an alliance with the Hapsburgs. For any alliance with them was directed, in the final analysis, to subordinating both friends and foes, allies and not allies, and tended to further this subordination in the course of the struggle. In other words, the danger for the allies could be greater than for the enemies, and this alone was liable to rule out or complicate relations of alliance. Alliance with those who wanted to set up a universal monarchy could be motivated only by a direct threat from one of the opponents of the Hapsburgs or, on the contrary, by a fallacious drive for territorial accessions even at the price of becoming a vassal of Madrid and Vienna.

The logic of forming and maintaining alliances was sooner or later bound to come into conflict with the logic of the ambient conflicts.

The Thirty Years War caused appalling ravages in Germany. By the end of that war popular movements erupted in England, Scotland, Ireland, France, a large part of Germany, Bohemia, the Ukraine and Russia, the Ottoman Empire, and, outside the European con-

tinent, also in China, India, Morocco, and Brazil. Those were large movements on the scale of whole countries. In addition, there were peasant and urban revolts, whose number and intensity had also risen steeply. In Provence, France, for example, sixty-six of the 400 peasant disturbances in the 17th century occurred in the five years of 1648 to 1653, and in Aquitaine there were perhaps 500 revolts in the hundred years, more than half of them occurring between 1635 and 1660. And a similar picture prevailed in nearly all regions where studies have been made.¹

Contemporaries were totally at a loss about the reasons that so depressed public morality. Giovanni Battista Riccioli, a Jesuit writer, complained that the variable behaviour of the sun and fluctuations in the number of sunspots affected the human condition. The Jesuit found people who agree with him—people who assume that decline in the number of sunspots increases the number of lean years in agriculture which, considering the growing populations, leads inevitably to greater privation. But even if we admit that owing to the drop in the sun's radiation in the 1630s and 40s crop yields did decline, the impact of a wholly mundane cause—the ambient conflict entering a particularly bitter phase—was doubtlessly incomparably greater.

We might note that as the years went by, the Thirty Years War became less and less a religious war and was conceived less and less by its contemporaries as a conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism. Still more characteristically, it was more than clear long before the final stage of the Thirty Years War that whatever its outcome, even if it were relatively favourable for the Hapsburg powers, it would never grow into a victory for the Catholic camp in the ambient conflict.

In the mid-forties of the 17th century matters were moving towards a final rout of the Hapsburg bloc, which fact, however, generated serious contradictions within the coalition that opposed it. But a military resolution of that ambient conflict was hindered by

¹ Geoffrey Parker, *Europe in Crisis. 1598-1648*, p. 17.

its intertwining with a new ambient conflict. The defeat of the camp of the Counter-Reformation would have been much more crushing and final if the internal struggles in England and France, which, though for different reasons, belonged among its opponents, had not grown sharper at that time. The growth of the capitalist mode of production and the crisis of the feudal system in both countries (in England much more, of course, than in France) tended to gradually destroy the progressive role that absolutism had played until then.

The English monarchy, for one thing, preferred to renounce its heretofore active foreign policy already in the late 1620s, in order to lessen its dependence on the financial allocations made by Parliament. As for the French absolute monarchy, at the time the negotiations led up to the Peace of Westphalia which wrote finis to the Thirty Years War, it had had to concentrate its efforts on combating the Fronde—a movement that expressed both the people's disaffection and the early bourgeois opposition but was headed by prominent grandes who were not foreign to separatist ambitions and sought to subordinate governmental authority to their own egoistic interests. It was initially the plans of aiding King Charles I of England and then the fight with the Fronde that compelled the French court to agree to a compromise peace with the emperor. This, the *de facto* head of government, Cardinal Mazarin, who had replaced Richelieu in that capacity, said time and again in so many words.

In 1642, when a civil war broke out in England between King Charles I and Parliament, the French government adopted a wait-and-see attitude. Though its sympathies were wholly on the king's side, it feared that any open stand on his behalf would prompt Parliament to seek alliance with the Hapsburg bloc. Generous in handing out advice to the king, the French court, in fact, gave him no material aid whatsoever. But as the English revolution progressed, Paris became more and more eager to aid Charles. This it was, coupled with the fight against the Fronde, that drove Cardinal Mazarin, as he admitted, into signing a

compromise peace with the emperor.

Serious peace negotiations began in 1641, and became especially intensive as from July 1643 when representatives of the warring countries had regular meetings in the Westphalian towns of Osnabrück and Münster. In the meantime, military operations continued. On November 2, 1642, the Swedes smashed the imperials in a second battle at Breitenfeld, where some eleven years before (September 1631) King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden scored a brilliant victory over an imperial army under Count von Tilly. In May 1643, the Spaniards suffered a crushing defeat at Rocroi, which dashed the emperor's hopes of obtaining Madrid's aid. But clashes between countries that belonged to the anti-Hapsburg camp (notably the war between Sweden and Denmark that began in 1643) prompted Vienna to procrastinate in the hope of signing a peace on more favourable terms. Madrid, too, had a stake in dragging out time, for its war with France continued (and did not end until 1659), and peace with Germany might have augmented French pressure on Spain.

For these reasons, peace would also have meant a breach in the close alliance of the Hapsburg powers. In a bid to pacify Madrid, the imperial diplomats tried to insert in the peace treaty a few clauses favouring Spain; they argued that the treaty would benefit and assist Spain for if the war continued the emperor would lose his hereditary possessions and the throne, with Spain losing its most faithful ally, and the like.

In 1646, Mazarin suggested exchanging Catalonia, most of which was occupied by French troops, for the Spanish Netherlands. Madrid lost no time to let the Dutch know of this plan, the latter naturally opposing the idea of having a strong France on their border instead of an enfeebled Spain. (Besides, for Holland keen rivalry with England was beginning to take precedence, leading up to a series of wars in the 1650s and 60s.)

In substance, the Dutch stopped making war in 1647, and on January 30, 1648, signed a separate treaty with Spain, after which the delegations of these two countries withdrew from the congress in

Münster. This peace meant that the Hapsburg bloc had begun to break up. It was the prelude to a peace between France and the empire, and, at the same time, predicated the continuation of the Franco-Spanish war.

Owing to the Fronde, France was compelled to hastily conclude peace with the empire. On October 23, 1648, Mazarin wrote to Abel Servien, the French diplomat in Münster, that it would "probably be better for the advancement of general peace that the war in the Empire should continue for some time". This saved the emperor, for "otherwise his downfall seemed inevitable".¹

The shadow of an imminent new conflict helped the conservative camp to emerge from the completed old one with relatively smaller losses than could have been expected, though, admittedly, with no hope of settling it favourably. A turn towards the policy pursued by France, the strongest of the anti-Hapsburg powers, led towards a settlement among the warring sides. In both camps the peace party was objectively more far-sighted than the war party. Its basic attitude, indeed, whatever its motives, enabled the peace party to see the situation in a more realistic light.

As I have said, in 1648 the Thirty Years War was the last of the religious wars among Christians in Europe. It culminated in the famous Treaty of Westphalia (which, in fact, constituted a system of treaties), which defined the main contours of international relations in Europe for what turned out to be one and a half century. For Germany, the peace had painful consequences: it caused its fragmentation, greater despotism on the part of the German princes, the omnipotence of the nobility, and a second serfdom of the peasants.

Germany, where the Hapsburg bloc and the Catholic Counter-Reformation as a whole made their final and desperate stand in a bid to settle the ambient conflict in their favour, was flung back a few centu-

¹ *Lettres du Cardinal Mazarin pendant son ministère*, compiled and published by A. Chéruel, Vol. III, Imprimerie nationale, Paris, 1883, pp. 218, 219.

ries. Its population shrank to less than half of what it had been, and in some parts of the country by 80, even 85, per cent. By the time the peace was signed, to use Engels's words, "Germany lay on the ground helpless, downtrodden, cut to pieces, bleeding".¹ But these grave consequences were the result not of the defeat of the Catholic camp, but rather of its attempt at settling the ambient conflict in its own favour.

May it be noted that the Treaty of Westphalia contained no articles on any of the German states having to pay financial contributions to other powers. Not only its contemporaries, but also historians of much later times, commended the treaty. Dietrich Reinkingk and Hippolitus Lapide, both of them jurists, described it (as well as the Peace of Augsburg of 1555) as an "aurea pax religiosa", as a "sacratissima constitutio" and as a "palladium Germaniae".² These and similar expressions spoke not only of a feeling of relief that the endless war was at last over, and not only that its articles reflected the interests of the imperial princes. They also spoke of the fact that following the Catholic camp's attempts to defeat Protestantism by resort to arms, the Peace of Westphalia was the only possible form of settling the conflict that had dragged out over almost a century and a half.

The Treaty of Westphalia acknowledged the independence of the German princes. It granted them all the prerogatives of supreme power—to collect taxes, mint coins, maintain an army, and conclude treaties with foreign states (with the one formal restriction that such treaties should not be directed against the emperor and the interests of the empire). But the treaty placed no additional restrictions on the powers of the emperor, while the right of the princes to conclude treaties with foreign states merely formalised a state of affairs that had prevailed at the very least since the beginning of the Reformation. The treaty recorded

¹ Frederick Engels, *The Peasant War in Germany*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, p. 150.

² Karl Aretin, "Das Problem des Religionsfriedens in der europäischen Politik", in *Rapports*, Vol. I, p. 202, 15th International Congress of Historical Sciences, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste Romania, Bucharest, 1980.

the existence of states with two religious ideologies—the *corpus catholicorum* and the *corpus evangelicorum*—as an accepted fact of the European system of international relations, including such relations within the framework of the Holy Roman Empire.

Several generations of German nationalist historians were inclined to view the Treaty of Westphalia as a complete victory of the anti-Hapsburg camp. This was done to justify Germany's aggressive pretensions. On November 14, 1906, speaking in the Reichstag, Prince Bernhard von Bülow, imperial chancellor and concurrently Prussian minister president, maintained that the Treaty of Westphalia had created France and destroyed Germany.

It is indeed true that the Treaty of Westphalia had stood for the defeat of the Hapsburg bloc, for it put an end once and for all to the plans of a universal Catholic empire, and of its scoring a military victory in the ambient conflict between the Counter-Reformation and Protestantism. In that sense, it was an indisputable victory for the anti-Hapsburg powers. It may also be right to say, however, that in a certain sense the Thirty Years War had ended in a tie: it did not culminate in any transformation of Europe in favour of either of the belligerent sides.

The Roman throne, which had given the Hapsburgs no special support, was nevertheless displeased over the outcome of the Thirty Years War. Pope Innocent X attacked the Treaty of Westphalia for having recognised freedom for Protestants to practise their faith in Germany and for letting them have a number of bishoprics. In France, some foes of Mazarin's faulted the cardinal for the insignificant advantages and acquisitions he had obtained for the country; others, those who succeeded to the party of *dévots*, accused him of the very opposite—of making an alliance with heretics.

Here is how Abbé Brousse described the Treaty of Westphalia in 1649: 'Whoever reads the treaty concluded in favour of the Swedes and the Protestants of Germany with the support of France and to the prejudice of the Church, will not be able to persuade

himself that it was not imbued by the counsel and spirit of some Turk or Saracen disguised in a cardinal's mantle."

Still, the papacy and its propaganda machine, powerful by the standards of those days, were compelled to gradually adapt to the new spirit. West German historian Georg Denzler, who studied Vatican archives and partly published the minutes of the Congregation of the Propaganda of the Faith in the first ten years after the Peace of Westphalia, arrived at the conclusion that the minutes no longer referred to the restoration of Catholicism at any price. "This is not to say," he adds, "that the leaders of the Church had willingly renounced lawful claims of various kinds, including 'such as laid claim to mundane territories. True, they no longer resorted to smear campaigns and baiting of Christians of other creeds, but found various other means of shielding Catholics from Lutheran or Calvinist influences."

Though the Catholic Church retained its old motivations and habits, it was gradually brought home to the "leading men in Rome and in the countries concerned, that Protestantism and Calvinism were made of the stern stuff that would not let itself be booted out of the world, at least for the time being".¹

The conclusion of the ambient conflict meant that the Netherlands was recognised in international law, serving as a precedent for the analogous recognition of other proto-capitalist countries. To be sure, formal diplomatic recognition lagged behind *de facto* recognition, even behind fairly close inter-state ties, for centuries in some cases. Great Britain and the Vatican, for example, restored diplomatic relations broken off at the time of the Reformation, after a lapse of more than four hundred years, in March 1982. Yet London and the papacy had carried out joint political actions nearly two hundred years before that—notably against the Great French Revolution.

¹ Georg Denzler, *Die Propagandakongregation in Rom und die Kirche in Deutschland im ersten Jahrzehnt nach dem Westfälischen Frieden*, Verlag Bonifacius-Druckerei, Paderborn, 1969, p. 214.

A French historian recently wrote the following of the 1648 treaties: "The Westphalian treaties were the hinges on which the doors of Europe opened from the Middle Ages into modern times."¹ An exaggeration, of course, but one that contains no small measure of the truth. Because the Peace of Westphalia doubtless stimulated the historical processes that led to the passage from feudalism to capitalism on the European continent.

The principles recorded in the Treaty of Westphalia were a victory for new standards in inter-state relations. In substance, they recognised the equality of ideologies that in the final analysis promoted different systems of property. That the conservative camp stopped trying to resolve the controversy by resort to arms was by itself a major victory for the forces that objectively acted as movers of social progress.

Certainly, the conclusion of the ambient conflict did not mean that the historical confrontation between feudalism and capitalism in inter-state relations was over. Objectively, it was also present in the striving of the feudal forces to buttress their internal positions by expanding contacts and making the most of the opportunities that such contacts with economically advanced countries yielded, and by utilising the latter's experience. But, objectively too, these contacts furthered and expedited the development of the new system in the countries concerned, and tended to erode the feudalistic pillars that existed in Europe.

The conclusion of the ambient conflict opened the way for the spread of the economic and technological achievements of the advanced countries to the rest of Europe. It also facilitated the spread to all Europe of the political experience of these countries, and in many cases eliminated the pretexts for persecuting elements that were bearers of new social relations.

Externally, this meant a certain relaxation of religious persecution (though this tendency did not rule out recurrences, such as the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in France in 1685). The specificity of the ambient conflict, which reflected the early stage of

¹ Paul Guth, *Mazarin*, Flammarion, Paris, 1972, p. 406.

the confrontation between capitalism and feudalism and had a religious wrapping, may, indeed, have led to the conflict's renewal at one of the later stages of the confrontation in new ideological garb.

The conclusion of the ambient conflict did not put an end to wars. In the early half of the 17th century just one year, and in the latter half six (1669-1671, 1680-1682) were the only years that saw no wars between European states. Still, the conclusion of the ambient conflict had a beneficial effect on all the countries concerned, relieving their peoples of the oppressive atmosphere that the ruling circles had justified by the exigencies of the conflict.

We might also take special note that the ending of the ambient conflict created external conditions for a rapid ripening of new social relations. The internal conditions, it is true, were different from country to country, and depended on the balance of class forces, and on the progress and outcome of the class struggle within each country.

To be sure, the bourgeoisie of the Netherlands and England was able to benefit from the favourable conditions to a far greater extent than, say, the German principalities ravaged by the Thirty Years War. Profound intrinsic reasons existed, of course, for the lag of some countries and the advancement of others. They hinged on the socio-economic developments, from country to country, on the fortunes of the class struggle. It was this, in the final count, that determined the "choice" by one or another state of its place in the ambient conflict (though historical traditions, dynastic motivations, the place of the country concerned in the system of international relations, and the like, could for a while become determinative).

It would be a mistake, however, to minimise the impact of the conflict on the subsequent history of the countries involved in it. The more intransigent of the belligerents from the reactionary camp were flung back economically and paid for their dogged pursuit of historically unattainable goals with centuries of backwardness. The lot of Spain and of the Catholic part of Germany speaks for itself. And that lot of theirs was shared (though in different measure) by

countries that had fallen under their power or influence, namely, the Italian states (especially Naples and Rome), Portugal, and the Southern Netherlands (Belgium) whose example is all the more striking against the background of rapid economic growth and prosperity in the Northern Netherlands, i.e., Holland, which managed to withstand the onslaught of the Catholic Counter-Reformation (or, more precisely, the attempts at exporting counter-revolution). Belgium became a backward country, and remained such for over two centuries, until its rich deposits of coal and iron ore brought it back into the company of economically advanced states.

From the Skies Down to Earth

The English Revolution began in 1640 when the Thirty Years War was still continuing on the mainland. For a number of reasons, above all because the absolutist government of Charles I was occupied combating internal opposition, England stood aloof from that war (for the abortive attempt to aid the Huguenots at La Rochelle in 1627 can hardly be considered participation in the Thirty Years War).

In the seventy-odd years since the uprising in England's northern counties was suppressed and until the English Revolution broke out—save for the one episode when the Spanish raided Newlyn—there had been no warfare on British soil. From 1588 to 1640 no English fleets took part in larger battles at sea, while the Dutch were fighting Spain's Atlantic navy.

Initially, the revolution caused no palpable changes in England's international position precisely because the other powers were involved in the Thirty Years War. The thought that if peace were concluded on the continent, the opponents of Charles I in England could be made to scale down their demands by threats of intervention on the part of the French king and other European monarchs, is clearly traceable in Mazarin's correspondence. But the Fronde played havoc with Mazarin's plans and reduced his ability to influence events in England practically to nought.

True, he was still intending to make a demarche in favour of Charles I that greatly resembled an ultimatum. On February 19, 1649, a day after the instruments ratifying the Treaty of Westphalia had been signed, the French ambassador was to have departed for London with a note containing threats. But that day word arrived of the execution of Charles I. A French intervention was senseless. Besides, the more far-sighted of the king's followers were aware that a foreign intervention would only consolidate all England against the house of Stuarts. So, in December 1652, Mazarin sent Antoine de Bordeaux, a diplomat, to London where he addressed members of the English Parliament, saying friendly relations between countries could be maintained irrespective of the form of government existing there.

By continuing the ambient conflict in the heart of Europe, the conservative camp doubtless expedited the ripening of the subjective factor and thus, too, the outbreak of the English Revolution. The tremendous influence that the Thirty Years War exercised on the thinking of the Puritans and their outrage over the royal court's policy, with the king refusing to back the anti-Hapsburg forces when that war began, are beyond question. There is no denying that the ambient conflict had, in various ways, aggravated the class contradictions in England, and hastened the ideological shaping of the camp that opposed absolutism.

Perhaps a study from that angle of the central event in European history—the English bourgeois revolution of the mid-17th century, which ushered in the era of modern history—will enable us to reach deeper into the remarkable observation that “these revolutions reflected the needs of the world at that time rather than the needs of those parts of the world where they occurred, that is England and France”.¹

The dialectic of history came into evidence in the fact that France, which participated in the ambient

¹ Marx, Engels, “The Bourgeoisie and the Counter-Revolution”, in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 161.

conflict as an extraneous force, had, at the end of that conflict, in effect renounced the then entirely manageable aim of crushing the conservative camp. It renounced this aim not only because of the strong aggravation of class contradictions inside the country, as illustrated by the Fronde, but also in order to launch a new ambient conflict by organising an armed intervention against the English bourgeois revolution.

The religious wrapping of Europe's ambient conflict had, beyond question, contributed to the fact that the English Revolution, too, had a religious wrapping. We may note, indeed, that the ideological wrapping of the Netherlands Revolution coincided with the wrapping of the ambient conflict between Protestantism and the Counter-Reformation. The ideological wrapping of the English bourgeois revolution of the mid-17th century, on the other hand, though religious in content, differed from that of the ambient conflict. Its ideological form was a struggle of different Protestant currents—Anglicanism, Presbyterianism, Congregationalism, and various other schools of the popular Reformation.

It is common knowledge that the English Revolution was the first revolution on a European scale. It is not clear as yet, however, to what extent it was European in scale as the first of the early bourgeois revolutions that occurred outside the framework of the ambient conflict in Europe.

For both England and France, the 17th century had been a time of rapid economic growth (interrupted, it is true, by a few periods of relative decline). To be sure, this general uplift which, I may add, occurred on dissimilar soil on either side of the English Channel, and the obstacles it encountered—all this was, essentially, outside the direct influence of the ambient conflict. While a bourgeois revolution was unfolding in England, the distribution of class forces in France was entirely different. The failure of the Fronde in the middle of the century, before it developed into a bourgeois revolution, led to the invigoration of absolutist monarchy for another historical era and the renewal of religious persecutions in that country. In 1685 Louis XIV revoked the Edict of

Nantes on religious toleration issued by Henry IV. This did not elicit approval even in Rome. The Pope, who did not get on with the "Sun King", said in 1688: "We in no way approve these forced conversions, which are usually insincere."¹

It should be remembered that previous notions continued to prevail by inertia for some time after the ambient conflict ended. This was true, also, of a period after the Peace of Westphalia, when, quite frequently, contemporaries still pictured the emperor and the Pope as the leading powers of the no longer existing camp of Counter-Reformation. It was only the system of military blocs that took shape thereafter, under which Vienna became a constant ally of the proto-capitalist states of England and Holland against the hegemonic aspirations of Louis XIV, that finally eradicated previous notions about the balance of power in Europe.

While laying its claim to hegemony in Europe, French absolutism made no attempt whatsoever to relight the extinguished flames of conflict between Protestantism and the Counter-Reformation.² In his *Mémoires*, which Louis XIV wrote for his son's education, he explained that it was "unfortunate to have a peace more profound than anyone had seen in centuries... At my age, the pleasure of being at the head of my armies made me desire a little more action abroad." The idea of a "holy war" against the infidels and heretics no longer suited the political realities of the latter half of the 17th century due, among other things, to the diminution—even if nonuniform—of the Turkish threat. In the 1670s, Louis XIV's foreign minister Pomponne wrote to General Feucquières: "I say nothing to you about the projects of a holy war, but you must be aware that they are no longer in

¹ H. Kamen, op. cit., p. 198.

² French historians have reached no consensus on whether Louis XIV strove for European hegemony or mere primacy (*primaute*) among the monarchs of Europe, whether he aimed at upsetting the European equilibrium or at altering it only partly to fit the interests of France (see Jean Baptiste Duroselle, *L'idée d'Europe dans l'histoire*, Denoël, Paris, 1965, pp. 100-101).

vogue since the times of St Louis" (that is, since the 13th century).¹ The wars that Louis XIV waged against coalitions of his enemies, including Protestant England and Holland along with the emperor, had no linkage with the ambient conflict even extraneously. Indeed, Pope Innocent XI (1676-1689) granted direct support to the "heretical" adversaries of the French king.

It took the Dutch republic longer than England and France to break out of the orbit of the ambient conflict; not until 1648 did Spain recognise the independence of the Netherlands. Still, it was able to keep relatively aloof from the main struggle. The victory of the new bourgeois relations paved the way for economic prosperity, for Holland's growth into a model 17th-century capitalist country. The wars it waged in the latter half of the century against England and France no longer had anything in common with the ambient conflict. Indeed, the Austrian branch of the Hapsburgs had time and again been a convenient ally. Hugo Grotius, who was regarded the top authority in the field of international law in the latter half of the 17th century, declared religious wars and attempts to impose the Christian faith on other peoples wholly unjust (with the sole exception of wars against brutal persecutors of Christians).²

But the religious wrapping of the struggle between the old and new systems survived in Europe even after the international camp of the Counter-Reformation became past history. That is why groups fighting inside and outside the various countries found it profitable to maintain the illusion that the conflict was raging on. Apart from all else, this helped to justify accepting foreign aid, though that aid was granted for aims other than those of the past ambient conflict.

Here, the most typical example would be England, which had gone through a bourgeois revolution already in the mid-17th century and had embarked on

¹ George Clark, *War and Society in the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1958, p. 16.

² *Des Hugo Grotius drei Bücher über das Recht des Krieges und Friedens*, Vol. II, Verlag von L. Heimann, Berlin, 1869, Chs. XX, XLVIII-XLIX, pp. 102-103.

a path that enabled it to economically outstrip Holland, the capitalistically most advanced country of that period. In 1660, the English bourgeoisie, and the gentry-turned bourgeois, brought back to the throne the son of Charles I, who had been executed during the revolution. The new king, Charles II (1660-1685), soon reneged on many of the political promises he had given. But he was intelligent enough not to impinge upon the basic economic results of the revolution. That is why he was excused not only the profligate waste of government monies on a harem of mistresses but also the partly secret but generally known sale of England's foreign policy independence for a most considerable sum to Louis XIV. Subjectively, the aims of Louis XIV, who sought to make Charles II dependent upon him by means of French subsidies, or, more precisely, to control England's foreign policy, had little or nothing in common with the aims of the ambient conflict. In this they differed from, say, analogous attempts of Charles V and Philip II during the reign of Mary Tudor. But in both cases the question hinged on one of the European mainland powers seeking hegemony on the continent. In the final count, French aid created the false impression—in the mind of James II, the successor of Charles II—that Catholic restoration was possible. This spurred James II to actions that resulted in his downfall, in the “glorious revolution” of 1688.

At first, the English bourgeoisie viewed the services which Charles II rendered Louis XIV in exchange for French gold with more or less toleration. And with good reason: up to a certain time, the hostility of the “Sun King” towards Holland suited the English bourgeoisie, for he had only set out on his ambitious programme of conquering the “Protestant sister” and at the same time a trading rival against whom Britain had resorted to arms on more than one occasion. But this toleration did not apply to any plans of restoring Catholicism and absolutism nursed by the narrow-minded and fanatical Duke of York, who had become successor to the throne (for Charles II had no legitimate children of his own).

At the end of the 1670s and in the early 80s, an

acute political crisis erupted, centred on a struggle to strip the Duke of York of the right of succession to the throne. It was at this point that the country learned of the existence of a Popish Plot—of Jesuit plans of assassinating Charles II and landing a foreign army to exterminate Protestants and restore popism. All this information was received from a certain Titus Oates, and was, in effect, pure fiction. Oates had no information about the plans of the Jesuits who, it is true, continued to weave their intrigues in England—now in favour of the Duke of York—but, naturally, had no intention of assassinating Charles II, who secretly favoured them.

All the same, the fraudulent Popish Plot served as a good excuse for political trials and executions, and once Charles II had seized the advantage over the opposition, its leaders, too, were accused of conspiring and consigned to the scaffold.

The Duke of York retained his right to succession, and upon occupying the throne in 1685 as King James II, managed to cling to power for a few years, until 1688, when all the opponents of the restoration of Catholicism and an authoritarian monarchy joined hands against him. The Stuarts were deposed. William of Orange, the stadholder of Holland, was invited to the throne, and was officially crowned as joint sovereign with his wife Mary, daughter of James II.

James, who had escaped to France, did not, however, lay down his arms. His followers, the Jacobites, conspired against the new government, producing one plot after another with the help of Louis XIV, and seeking the support of the other Catholic powers.

To be sure, this support doomed the Jacobites' designs to failure, for any new restoration of the Stuarts was impossible even theoretically, unless it would completely acknowledge the new socio-economic and political order that had triumphed in England. By summoning up the ghosts of the old ambient conflict, the Jacobites indeed deprived themselves of all chances of success.

In the meantime, the Jesuits continued their plotting. In the early 18th century, during the Northern

War (which Russia waged against Sweden for an outlet to the Baltic Sea) they supported the attempt made by King Charles XII of Sweden to pry the Ukraine away from Russia by utilising the treachery of Ukrainian hetman Ivan Mazepa. Alexander Pushkin, the great Russian poet, wrote:

*Indulging intrigue round,
Mazepa leagues with Jesuit
To rouse the crowd
With promise of a shaky throne.*

But all these intrigues had nothing to do with the camp of the Counter-Reformation, which had ceased to exist when the ambient conflict ended.

The English Revolution was the last of the revolutions that had a religious wrapping. It may even be said that the secularisation of social and political life in the latter half of the 17th century still had a religious complexion. It was a process that relieved the Church of functions that were not its own, and separated it from those aspects of life which referred exclusively to the sphere of lay interests. Certainly, the process slowed down with the development of absolutism, whose progressive role receded more and more into the past.

The modern-day clerical historians try to obfuscate or totally deny the conflict between religion and science, which grew especially sharp since the Renaissance. They portray this conflict not as a collision of essence, but as a mere controversy between certain levels of the scientific and religious world outlooks. As we know, the tactic of the Church towards science changed time and again—the method of repressions or direct attacks gave way to a search for agreement that is so characteristic of the policy of the Church in the present era.

Hence the wish of clerical historians to take this search back to the past, to the 16th and the early half of the 17th centuries when the ambient conflict saw a sharp aggravation of the clash between religion and empirical knowledge (science) which was gathering

strength.¹ Apart from everything else, such distortions obscure the fact that for decades after the ambient conflict science was quickly relieving itself of the constraints and controls of religion. There was also this other important fact: the progress of science and technology, rapid as it was, was inconceivable without relieving scientific thought of the guardianship of theology; it was even called a scientific revolution in historical literature.

This was the time of the works and researches of Descartes and Pascal, Spinoza and Newton, Boyle and Hooke, Leuwenhoek and Huygens, and many other philosophers, mathematicians, and natural scientists. This was the time that saw a precipitous advancement of natural sciences, the establishment of academies in Paris and London, and later also in other capitals and cities. This was the time, too, when systematic communications took shape between scientists of different countries, so that new discoveries and ideas in many fields of science got to be known all over Europe rapidly, and were quickly put to use.

English and American historians are engaged in a lively controversy on whether or not there had been a direct causal connection between Protestantism (especially Puritanism) and the scientific (they prefer to call it intellectual) revolution.² They note that in the 16th and early half of the 17th century, the Catholic camp (the Jesuits included) facilitated or, at least, did not obstruct progress in certain fields of science when this did not go against its interests. Famous astronomer Johannes Kepler relied on astronomical observations of Jesuits in different countries, while one of the members of the Society of Jesus even published the discoveries of Galileo Galilei in Chinese translation in Peking.³

¹ Catholic influence on Western "lay" historiography has led to claims that it never obstructed the scientific intellectual revolution and that religious orders had even taken an active part in it (Frederick L. Nussbaum, *The Triumph of Science and Reason, 1660-1685*, Harper and Row, New York, 1953, pp. 179-180).

² *The Intellectual Revolution of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. by Charles Webster, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1974.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 264, 270, 277.

In the latter half of the 17th century, fellows of the Royal Society in London, which embodied the "intellectual revolution", resolutely declined to debate religious issues.¹ The intellectual revolution came 150 years after the Renaissance when the striving for the empirical study of nature appeared but could make only very slow headway during the ambient conflict. Scientific progress in Europe was properly spurred by the social changes that resulted from the first bourgeois revolutions. It should be remembered, however, that in Holland, which was the first to go through a bourgeois revolution, favourable conditions arose only after the ambient conflict ended, as was the case also in France, and this despite the fact that the Fronde failed to develop into a bourgeois revolution. In countries that were part of the conservative camp up to the very end of the conflict or that had been the arena of that conflict for a long time, the conditions for scientific and intellectual progress were totally lacking for many years.

The secularisation of science also affected the growth of political thought. Up to about the middle of the 17th century, the bulk of the political theorists tended to identify the interests of the state and those of the anointed sovereign (partly, this continued until much later). True, it was assumed that a fair monarch's duty was to devote himself to the welfare of his subjects, but these latter were often residents not of one but of different possessions of that sovereign. Part of these territories were acquired or lost at times of war, though this was not considered a loss or acquisition for the population of each of the remaining possessions. Often enough, the transfer of such possessions to the power of another monarch due to wars or dynastic marriages, was not considered an infringement upon the interests of its population, if the old legislation and the local administration remained intact.

As nation-states came into being, a different tendency arose, which grew much stronger after the mid-17th-century English Revolution, and this not only in

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

England: there was a differentiation between purely dynastic and state interests in the proper sense of the word, with the former being regarded as useful for the country only to the extent to which they coincided with the latter.

Not only the concept of "state" but also that of "Europe" was relieved of its religious wrapping. Scholars established the period when the term "Europe" was first used in the Western political vocabulary as the designation of an integral body, ousting the former concept of "Christendom" and "Christian world". This dates to between 1680 and 1715. While mention of Europe in this sense was a rare exception prior to 1680, it became so commonplace at the end of the 17th century that few diplomatic documents of the period omitted it. More, the interests of Europe became a constant pretext justifying disparate, often opposite, aims and diplomatic and military undertakings.

The text of the treaty of alliance concluded by Louis XIV and his grandson Philip V (crowned in Spain in 1701) contained the following declaration: "Nothing can contribute more to the maintenance of peace and order in Europe than this union."¹ The powers that began a war to prevent the union of the French and Spanish monarchies, as recorded in the 1701 treaty, also concluded an alliance, with Britain at their head. The accord they signed on this score described this alliance as "the most solid foundation of peace and order in Europe".²

Still earlier, a few months after the "glorious revolution" in England, on April 19, 1689, the House of Commons, which denounced Louis XIV's conquests, described them as a "subversion of the liberties of Europe".³ Here "Europe" was a word that disguised the religious distinctions between the enemies of France—Protestant England and Holland, on the one hand, and their Catholic allies, above all the

¹ J. B. Duroselle, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

² *Ibid.*

³ H. D. Schmidt, "The Establishment of 'Europe' as a Political Expression", in *The Historical Journal*, No. 2, Vol. IX, 1966, pp. 172-178.

Emperor of the Holy Roman (German) Empire, that is, the Austrian branch of the Hapsburg dynasty which had, until 1700, also occupied the Spanish throne, on the other.

Louis XIV and James II (Stuart), driven out of England by the "glorious revolution", whom France had granted asylum and whom it continued to recognise as the English king, preferred the term "Christendom". Typically, acting on the idea of Christendom, the European states had, until the final third of the 17th century, when declaring war usually referred to certain rights that they had to safeguard.

The Treaty of Utrecht (1713), which put an end to the War of the Spanish Succession, was the last such document to still mention the *Respublica Christiana*, and the first to state that its purpose was to maintain the balance of power in Europe.¹

If, initially, the emphasis was on the unity of Christianity, later, from approximately the second third of the 17th century on, it was laid on the independence of the states that composed it.

Hugo Grotius and his followers made the principle of state sovereignty the point of departure in their concept of international law, while historians began examining the past of Europe as a sum of intertwining histories of separate countries. Sully and his contemporaries used the balance of power idea as something that served European unity. Seventy or eighty years later, political theorists such as Penn, Bellers and Abbot Saint-Pierre declared the specific interests of each state comprising the European community as being of no less importance. This evolution is all the more noteworthy, because it is distinctly seen in the works of the aforementioned authors who, concerned with plans of creating a European federation, should have been more concerned with the idea of European unity.

The projects of a European federation were received variously by the Enlightenment. Many of them, who thought these projects utopian, regarded Europe as a

¹ Francis Harry Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1963, pp. 165, 171.

unity of diversity. Montesquieu, for one, saw this as Europe's greatest distinction and advantage over Asia, which was in a state of stagnation. In his *L'Esprit des Lois* (1748), he stressed that though the European countries were a distinct community, it was impossible to incorporate them in one state. The most that could be expected of them was that they would do each other the most good at times of peace, and the least bad at times of war.

The Roots and Fruits of Education

The Treaty of Westphalia concluded in 1648 recorded the Catholic Counter-Reformation's failure to settle the conflict with Protestantism in its favour and restore the religious unity of Western Europe (the Protestant side had never set itself such an aim, for it meant the adversary had to be completely crushed). This put an end, too, to any power trying to establish hegemony in the framework of the ambient conflict through the use of the opportunities it provided. Western literature suggested introducing a concept of a war that radically altered the system of international relations as distinct from other kinds of armed conflict.¹ The wars in the framework of ambient conflicts were invariably directed to such a result.

For a century and a half after the Treaty of Westphalia, the system of international relations was relatively stable. The wars of the latter half of the 17th and of the 18th century, including those of the Spanish (1702-1713) and Austrian (1740-1748) Successions and the Seven Years War (1756-1763) introduced only a partial change. It was traceable to the fact that Russia had grown into a top European power, Prussia had become stronger, Poland was partitioned, and England's struggle with France for colonial and maritime supremacy ended in favour of the former.

The specific thing about the 18th century (up to 1789) was that it had far fewer war years than the

¹ See Golo Mann, *Wallenstein*, S. Fischer Verlag, Frankfort on the Main, 1972, pp. 1172-1173.

16th and the 17th. No European state was able to set itself aims outside the country, leading to the elimination of some major state or cardinally upsetting the European balance of power. The European countries did not swing out for anything more than immediate advantages and territorial acquisitions usually "compensated" by an extension and strengthening of the other main powers. True, this relative stability of the power balance was achieved by prejudicing the interests of smaller countries.

But often enough the whole thing concerned purely dynastic domains (such as most of the German and Italian principalities) whose partial incorporation in a larger realm (especially if ethnically related) was not always a negative thing. An exception is the partitions of Poland, though this was negative when Polish territory as such was partitioned rather than the Ukrainian and Byelorussian lands, whose incorporation in Russia reunified the Ukrainian and Byelorussian nations.)

Professor Louis J. Halle, whom we have already referred to, wrote: "When the Thirty Years War came to an end in 1648, the population of Europe had been tormented by over a century of warfare. The religious issues that provided the chief occasion of this warfare remained, still, unresolved; and by that time the scourge of war had become the normal accompaniment of life to peoples who, for so long, had known nothing else. In 1648, therefore, it would have required a determined optimism indeed to predict that war as it had been known was now at an end for an indefinite period, that whatever wars occurred in Europe for at least a century and a half to come would be much more like war games—exercises in maneuver—than like the mutual butchery which had been known for so long a time. Yet such a prediction would have been true."¹

Halle's description of that era suffers from a "determined optimism" of its own, though it does contain fairly correct observations. The expansionism

¹ Louis J. Halle, "Does War Have a Future?", in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 52, No. 1, October 1973, pp. 30-31.

that is built into any system based on the exploitation of man by man made wars an ineluctable feature of feudal and bourgeois society.

Among the multitude of predatory wars a considerable number were wars against countries with a different social and political system. In a certain sense, these wars were an interaction of social systems in the international arena, though they were not fought for counter-revolutionary or revolutionary aims but exclusively for the sake of conquest, for access to the economic exploitation of other countries and peoples—as were the wars between countries with the same type of social or political arrangement.

The entire predatory colonial expansion of feudal and capitalist powers was, I am tempted to say, the same sort of non-peaceful contention between social systems. And yet in the 18th century big changes occurred in the character and aims of wars, and in the European public's opinion of them.

“The men of the Enlightenment no longer accepted war as the necessary destiny of mankind, a fate to be endured with patience and courage,” writes Michael Howard in his recent book, *War in European History*. ‘Nor did eighteenth-century economists see in it that unique source of wealth which had seemed so obvious and necessary to their seventeenth-century predecessors.’¹ Religious and dynastic interests, too, no longer had the previous self-sustained significance. In the mid-18th century, indeed, Coyer, author of *La noblesse commerçante*, wrote that the “system of Europe” had changed and commerce figured in all international treaties as an interest of the state. While Bougainville, a political theorist of the nobility, observed that “the balance of trade has become a balance of power”.²

The 18th-century wars were sometimes called trade wars. But whatever the case may be, I am inclined to agree with the historians who hold that in the century

¹ Michael Howard, *War in European History*, Oxford University Press, London, 1976, p. 73.

² Georges Livet, *L'équilibre européen de la fin du XVe à la fin du XVIIIe siècle*, Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 1976, p. 105.

and a half after the Peace of Westphalia there was "a certain moderation in the conduct of war".¹

These wars were fought by armies of soldiers who had undergone years of intensive training, and who could not be easily and swiftly replaced by green recruits. Those armies had cost too much to be placed in jeopardy and to suffer heavy losses in large-scale battles. In the Middle Ages, wars were an occupation of the nobility, now they were the trade of professional armies. It was believed that the general population should, whatever its attitude towards the war aims, take no part in war either directly or indirectly. The aims, indeed, were never centred on total defeat of the other side or total destruction of its military potential or its total destruction as a factor of European politics or occupation of its territory or change of its political system or religion. Nor were all available material resources invoked in these wars (with the partial exception, for France, of the War of the Spanish Succession in its concluding phase).

The powers, especially the proto-capitalist states, expanded the framework of a conflict only if this had no immediate negative effect on the country's economic condition. The other reason why the conflicts were of "a certain moderation" was that the battles between the main contenders in the scramble for colonies—England and France—occurred outside Europe, and that the means of supplying armies were therefore limited and kept down the scale of the armed operations.

Though there is no statistics at hand to prove it, an incomparably smaller part of the national resources was spent on war needs in the 18th than in the preceding centuries which had abounded in ambient conflicts. And that, of course, was one of the main reasons for Europe's swift economic uplift as far as that uplift was at all possible in the framework of the feudal system, and for the development of capitalism, and even for the appearance of the first signs of the industrial revolution, which, to be sure, asserted itself

¹ Richard Hobbs, *The Myth of Victory: What Is Victory in War?*, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1979, p. 17.

then only in bourgeois England.

How did 18th-century England beat France in the scramble for colonial and maritime supremacy? Leaving aside the reference of chauvinist historians to the inborn qualities of the Briton that were said to have assured him success on the seas, the usual explanation is that a rapidly developing bourgeois country is positively ordained to outstrip any feudal state.

This explanation, though doubtless correct in substance, provides no answer, however, as to the more immediate reasons for the defeat of France. For it is incontestable that France, too, experienced a rapid growth of capitalism, whose material resources the authoritarian government could well have used. Besides, its population was approximately thrice that of England, and England, on the other hand, had no significant technical superiority in military matters, at least until the beginning of the industrial revolution, that is, until 1760s. Consequently, we must presume that the essential reason (victory of the bourgeois system in England) worked in some other ways.

The foreign policy of the proto-capitalist state reflected the interests of the bourgeoisie in far greater measure than that of the feudal state, thus pushing to the background all other possible motives (including dynastic ones). This it was, indeed, that enabled England to win colonial and maritime superiority over the France of Louis XIV which set great store, alongside a similar aim, by its plans of winning hegemony in Europe. These plans naturally provoked active opposition on the part of powers other than England, from which the latter profited to great advantage, having the chestnuts pulled out of the fire for it by its continental allies, by their excellent infantry.

In other words, the fact that the French monarchy borrowed the Hapsburgs' ambition of dominating at least the Western part of the European continent, was one of the reasons why it was defeated in the clash with England. And since, in a sense, the plans of such hegemony were objectively directed at safeguarding the feudal system, the defeat of the country that pursued them spelled failure for any attempts at pre-

venting the coexistence in Europe of states with different social systems.

The century that preceded the Great French Revolution is often called the Age of Enlightenment and, indeed, also the age of "enlightened absolutism". What strikes the eye is that absolutism acquired this "enlightenment" with the waning of one ambient conflict and lost it with the outbreak of another.

The conclusion of the ambient conflict in the mid-17th century had a diverse effect on the Age of Enlightenment. True, it was not the conclusion and absence of the ambient conflict that made Enlightenment possible. But this absence certainly expedited the ripening of the ideas of the Enlightenment, paved the way for their rapid spread, and gave them Europe-wide resonance—even in countries where the new capitalist relations were still in their incipient stage. For in the Age of Enlightenment there no longer existed demands for religious, political or social uniformity as a basis for normal relations between states.

In England, on the other hand, the privileged segments of the bourgeoisie holding power observed the growth on the continent of the capitalist mode and the bourgeois ideology through the prism of their rivalry with France and other countries. The fact that the latter followed the English example was no source of satisfaction for them, but rather of apprehensions that this sort of "imitating" may strengthen their trading rivals. Small wonder, then, that the press expressing the mood of the radical opposition of the 1760s, welcomed the ideas of the famous *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and d'Alembert, but added that "as Englishmen, we may have no reason to rejoice at the prospect of a gradual establishment of such a system among our rivals".¹

The absence of the ambient conflict in the mid-17th century left an imprint on the Enlightenment. The fact that the connection between religious clashes and clashes to safeguard national interests or to win na-

¹ *England's Rise to Greatness, 1660-1763*, ed. by Stephen B. Baxter, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1983, pp. 12-13.

tional independence was severed on a European scale in the latter half of the 17th century had to no small degree impelled the anti-clerical orientation of the Enlightenment.

There was also a distinct effect on the feudal political superstructure. The absence of an ambient conflict, indeed, was the root reason why a phenomenon like "enlightened absolutism" was at all possible. In previous times, the progressiveness of absolutism was traceable, among other things, to its taking the country out of the ambient conflict or of taking it into the progressive camp in the framework of that conflict. In the 18th century, however, when the progressiveness of absolutism in Europe as a whole had become a thing of the past, its partial galvanisation from time to time in individual countries was connected with the absence of the ambient conflict. Absolutism could become "enlightened" only because the ambient conflict no longer cast its shadow upon it.

The reforms introduced by "enlightened absolutism" were objectively aimed at preventing the impending revolution, and were at the same time concessions in face of the demands of capitalist development, practicable only in the international setting of functioning European monarchies.

The same applies to absolutism's foreign policy. At the time of the American Revolution, for example, the question of a counter-revolutionary intervention in any form did not even arise. King George III's request for Russia to send a 20,000-man corps to America was instantly turned down in St Petersburg, where the events in the New World were viewed through the prism of Anglo-Russian relations and the probable impact that the independence of the colonies would make on European politics.

In her reply to the English king of October 4, 1776, Catherine II referred with a trace of sarcasm to the likely unfavourable consequences that "such a joining of our forces for the sole purpose of putting down a rebellion, that is not supported by any foreign power, might have". And in the summer of 1779, a secret report of the Foreign Affairs Collegium of Russia said bluntly that the English colonies in Amer-

ica had become "through the fault of the British government an independent and self-governing region".¹

London could count on the military assistance of secondary powers only, and in return for political or purely financial compensation (e.g., the purchase of soldiers from the German princes), while, in substance, Europe's monarchic powers were planning armed actions not against but in support of the rebellious colonies.

Even the hesitation of the French government to enter into an alliance with the American colonies was only partly due to ideological motivations. The more tangible reason was that it doubted the colonies' ability to stand their ground against the metropolitan country, and feared that France might be directly involved in military actions—most undesirable in view of the deplorable state of its finances—and, finally, that it hoped England would pay it generously for its neutrality, thus letting Paris avenge itself without a fight for its defeat in the Seven Years War, and so on.

Besides, France and Spain were aware that nearly 40 per cent of England's merchant fleet was tied up in the colonies, and were clearly fearful of American competition in the Western Hemisphere. Spain was especially disturbed, for it had enormous possessions in the New World. But Paris, too, was secretly troubled over American plans of conquest.

Montmorin-Saint-Hérem, French ambassador to Spain, wrote to Foreign Minister Vergennes in Paris on November 12, 1778, that Spain regarded the United Colonies a probable adversary in the near future and was disinclined to accept the prospect of the Americans coming close to the frontiers of its possessions in the New World. In his reply of November 27, 1778, Vergennes tried to dispel these fears. He was surprised, he wrote, that England was seen as less of a danger than the Americans, whose republic was, owing to its diversity and disparity of interests, a feeble body politic not capable of effective activity.

¹ N. N. Bolkhovitinov, *Russia and the War of the USA for Independence, 1775-1783*, Moscow, 1976, p. 19 (in Russian).

Allaying the fears of the devotees of royalty's sacred rights, Vergennes also maintained—none too convincingly—that since the colonists had declared their independence, they were no longer subjects of George III and could well become allies of a foreign power. To justify its alliance with the United States, the French government explained to monarchic Europe that it had merely prevented an Anglo-American alliance. Vergennes followed his foreign policy with resolve, because he was certain that action on the side of the Colonies would gain France its lost prestige and influence in Europe. I might note that by this time at home French absolutism had, contrarily, set its course on reaction, and revoked Turgot's liberal reforms.

A typical point: when French volunteers under Marquis de Lafayette set out for America in 1776, they were motivated less by ideological sympathy and much more by the wish to secure "freedom of the seas" or, in other words, to contest English naval supremacy.

Unlike France, its formal ally, Austria, eager to please London, stressed its "non-recognition" of the rebellious colonies. Emperor Joseph II pointed out to Sir Robert Keith, the British ambassador in Vienna, that "the cause in which England is engaged is the cause of all sovereigns, who have a joint interest in the maintenance of due subordination and obedience to law in all the surrounding monarchies". He said he observed with pleasure "the vigorous exertions of the national strength which the King is employing to bring his rebellious subjects to submission, and I sincerely wish success to the measures"¹. In practice, however, Joseph II tried to profit from the situation, acting as middleman between the warring sides, but in vain.

It is the considered opinion of certain American historians that the Colonies would hardly have won without the aid of European states. The subsidies they received from their allies amounted (in terms of

¹ Richard B. Morris, *The Peacemakers. The Great Powers and American Independence*, Harper & Row, New York, 1965, p. 153.

the value of money today) to approximately 2.5 billion dollars, while they themselves spent only one billion dollars on the struggle. They received 90 per cent of the gunpowder they needed up to the battle at Saratoga from France, which also provided them with 30,000 rifles in 1777—a huge number, considering the scale of military operations in those days.¹

Only in the “psychological climate” of that era, an era free of any ambient conflict in the field of international relations, could Benjamin Franklin and George Washington, the leaders of the revolution, become models of civic duty and political wisdom to monarchic Europe.

Certainly, the international relations of that time had been taken into account by Washington, the first American president, when, in his famous Farewell Address, he called on the nation to maintain peaceful relations and to cooperate with all countries, having in mind the European states above all, though most of them had a social and political system different from that in the United States.

“Revolutionary War” Advocated

For a century and a half the camp of the Counter-Reformation, that is, feudal reaction, resorted to armed force to stamp out “heresy”, which in the final analysis gave the ideology of the new, capitalist class a religious wrapping. A century and a half later, feudal reaction renewed this attempt, this time against revolutionary forms of tearing down the political superstructure of the old society and installing a new one to suit the new, bourgeois system.

The Great French Revolution turned the new, more mature expression of the basic contradiction between the feudal and bourgeois systems—the contradiction between absolutism and parliamentarism

¹ Some US historians hold that aid to the United States prevented France from carrying out reforms at home to buttress absolutism (Jonathan R. Dull, *The French Navy and American Independence. A Study of Arms and Diplomacy, 1774-1787*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1975).

(sometimes portrayed as the contradiction between monarchy and the republican system)—into an ambient conflict. How did that conflict arise and develop? To answer this question we must examine the international relations of the epoch of the revolution and the Napoleonic empire through the prism of history.

Genuine internationalism was always foreign to the class interests of the bourgeoisie. Capitalist nationalism, the antipode of internationalism, asserts bourgeois supremacy within the capitalist state and, indeed, makes that state an instrument for securing its aims on the international scene—aims that are essentially egoistic, that take no notice of the interests of other nations and countries. Even the internationalist aspirations of the democratic wing of bourgeois revolutionaries were superficial and transient, and always, even if unconsciously, dualistic. Its advocacy of revolutionary war was, in fact, a distortion of internationalist ideas. It was based on bourgeois nationalism and reflected the expansionist aspirations of the bourgeoisie (as well as its aim of channelling the unexpended revolutionary energy of the mass of the people into safer waters so it could be advantageously used by the propertied classes).

It is probably fair to say that in the role of a revolutionary class, of leader of the masses, the bourgeoisie advocated only just, politically defensive, wars. By so doing, it gravitated towards coexistence with states that had a different social system. But bourgeois policy betrayed the character of the bourgeoisie as a class of exploiters, a class that, depending on the specific historical conditions, sought agreement with internal and external reaction against the revolution in some cases, and advocated “revolutionary war” in others, pregnant with a tendency towards conquest and injustice. Any failure of a “revolutionary war” paved the way to counter-revolution, while its success was exploited for the bourgeoisie’s expansionist ambitions contrary to the interests of its “own” people and the peoples subjected to aggression.

The development of the French Revolution into an armed ambient conflict was accomplished by different forces—the Girondins inside France and the French

royalist emigrés outside the country, who appealed to the foreign powers to intervene.

From the autumn of 1791 on, the Girondin leaders, notably Jacques Pierre Brissot, zealously advocated a "revolutionary war". They argued that foreign powers were providing secret aid to emigré aristocrats, and also claimed that the people of France were duty bound to liberate other peoples from the rule of tyrants. The Girondin papers, and Brissot and his associates in the Legislative Assembly, depicted war as an armed promenade, as a result of which the European peoples would rise as one man, while the troops of the monarchic despots would disperse at the approach of the French army. The Girondins exploited the slogan of revolutionary war to come to power. In December 1791, they succeeded in having the careerist Narbonne-Lara, who sought to profit from backing the Girondins, appointed war minister. On December 15, Brissot wrote in his newspaper, *Patriote français*: "War, war—that is the cry of all patriots, the wish of all the friends of liberty scattered across Europe, who cannot wait for this happy occasion to overthrow and attack their tyrants."¹

Brissot repeated this call in the Jacobin Club on the following day, arguing that war was the only way of buttressing the revolution, and that no European power could stand up to France. Speaking in the Legislative Assembly, Brissot maintained that war would resolve all the country's difficulties, and that the revolution brought to other nations on French bayonets would make them "happy". Brissot's examination of the international situation is a classic example of wishful thinking. In the Girondin leader's opinion, the people of England were wholly on the side of France and would not hesitate in choosing between liberty and the king, between peace, which he needed, and war, which would spell disaster for him. The German emperor, too, was beset by dangers on all sides and was hard put to it to retain his hold on

¹ H.-A. Goetz-Bernstein, *La diplomatie de la Gironde. Jacques-Pierre Brissot*, Librairie Hachette, Paris, 1912, pp. 44-45.

Hungary and Belgium. Prussia could not afford a clash with France, for this would weaken it in relation to Austria, its old rival. Making these arguments, Brissot maintained that Catherine II, too, who allegedly feared for her throne, to say nothing of Sweden, Holland and Spain, could not be an effective opponent. The leader of the Girondins espied the main danger in that other powers might evade battle. "War is now a national blessing,"¹ Brissot declared. What had to be feared, he added, was that no war would begin. The Girondin leader hushed up the fact that the royal court, which had initially resisted the war plans, had had a change of heart and now supported them on the assumption that the seemingly inevitable defeat of the French army would help to suppress the revolution.

Among the ideas that prompted the Girondins and their allies of that time to advocate revolutionary war, was that the "security" of the new republic required considerable annexations (in substance, the maximum territorial accessions earlier contemplated by monarchic France).

Lazare Carnot, organiser of the armed forces of the French Republic, said that it was essential to attain and defend the old and natural frontiers of France running along the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees. This view was backed by many influential political leaders—Foreign Minister Lebrun and Danton, among others. On January 31, 1793, in fact, Georges Jacques Danton publicly demanded the establishment of the natural frontiers. The wishes of the people were, in effect, overlooked as the annexationist plans gained currency. True, most of the people of Savoy and Nice sought unification with France. But this was certainly not the case in Belgium and the Rhine area.

When in the autumn of 1792 through the heroic efforts of the people, the first serious defeats were inflicted on the Prussian and Austrian interventionists, the Girondins began speaking more and more often, and more and more frankly, of what were in effect annexationist plans. Père Grégoire, speaking in

¹ *Le Moniteur universel*, December 31, 1791.

the Convent, demanded the annexation of Nice and Savoy—not simply to liberate their peoples, but in the name of the arguments of geography and the task of successful warfare. On November 26, 1792, Brissot declared that the French Republic was engaged in a struggle with the German "colossus" and would never feel safe until all Europe was engulfed in flames. While demanding that the French "natural frontier" should run along the Rhine, Brissot added that there could be no peace with the Bourbons and that consequently France should prepare for a campaign in Spain.¹

The Girondin draft constitution published on the orders of the Convent in February 1793, contained provisions taken from the theory of revolutionary war. The draft said that France renounced annexation of foreign territory, unless the majority of the local population wanted it and the territory in question did not belong to a state governed under a freely approved constitution. No country in Europe (including the republics of Switzerland and Venice) could seemingly meet the latter demand. In general, however, the French Republic pledged respect for foreign institutions if they were based on the consent of the entire mass of the people—and here, again, the political arrangements in no European country could meet this demand.

The French Revolution expressed the needs of all Europe to a far greater extent than those of France, the country where it occurred. Yet the Girondins wanted to supply Europe with a revolution from France, and thereby gave reaction the chance of posing as the protector of state (even national) interests. Calling for revolutionary war, the Girondins, who represented the sentiment of the big bourgeoisie, sought to avert any deepening of the revolution in France itself. And it was only to be expected that when this plan fell through, the advocates of revolutionary war would come to terms with the counter-revolution and with foreign interventionists against their own people.

¹ H.-A. Goetz-Bernstein, *La diplomatie de la Gironde...* pp. 321, 328, 331.

Jean-Paul Marat demonstrated the underlying reasons for the warlike mood of the Girondins. He showed that Brissot's arguments about the "weakness" of the adversaries of France were contradictory, and challenged Brissot's argument that war should be invoked to prevent the adversaries of France from helping the emigrés. "And if we have nothing to fear from these powers," Marat wrote, "why should we be so disturbed over emigrés who turned to them for help."¹ On the eve of the declaration of war, Marat observed bitterly that the people, deceived by the intoxicating speeches of Brissot and his accomplices, evidently wanted war no less than their implacable enemies.²

Robespierre consistently combated the idea of revolutionary war. He said it was essential to restore order in one's own house, and absurd to try and force other peoples to accept the constitution by resort to arms. Speaking at the Jacobin Club on January 25, 1792, he said: "What if the foreign nations, if the soldiers of the princes of Europe, turn out to be less philosophical and less ripe for a revolution like yours which you yourselves find so difficult to bring to an end, and what if they think that it is their prime concern to repulse an unexpected aggression without considering the degree of democracy of the generals and soldiers who have come to them?"³

Subsequently, under Robespierre's influence, the foreign policy of the Jacobin government wholly renounced the dogmas of revolutionary war. It is a fact, however, though poorly studied and not even recorded, that propaganda of revolutionary war has, ever since the 18th century, served as fertile soil for bourgeois nationalism which, of course, was disguised by revolutionary rhetoric.

The advocacy of revolutionary war helped, in its turn, to further interventionist tendencies in the pol-

¹ *L'Ami du peuple*, October 25, 1791.

² *L'Ami du peuple*, April 19, 1792.

³ *Oeuvres de Maximilien Robespierre*, Vol. VIII, Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 1954, p. 137.

icy of the main European powers, though they did encounter resistance and their triumph was certainly no foregone conclusion.

The Motley Coalition

The distinctions in the international setting of the two late 18th-century revolutions—the American and the French—are easily seen. The American bourgeois revolution had the direct or indirect aid of a coalition of feudal authoritarian powers active against bourgeois England. Some fifteen years later, a similar coalition, this time headed by England, took shape to oppose the French bourgeois revolution.

Yet in the first two-and-a-half years of the French Revolution, which began with the storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789, the foreign intervention sought by the royalists appeared to be a fairly distant and uncertain proposition. The European powers pretended that the ostensibly voluntary adoption of the 1791 Constitution by King Louis XVI stood for a "lawful" approval of the new political order. And since constitutional monarchy had taken root in England a whole century before, why not suffer the same thing in France?

True, feudal monarchic governments took steps to cushion the differences between Austria and Prussia, the two probable protagonists in an intervention. England's policy worked in the same direction. Though at that time England had no intention of going to war against France, it felt that it should be prepared for such a turn of events. At the Reichenbach Conference in 1790, after considerable bargaining, Prussia agreed not to interfere in the affairs of the Austrian Netherlands (Belgium). As a result, Austrian troops were able to suppress the national liberation movement of the Belgians in November 1790. Contemplating a campaign against revolutionary Paris, Vienna and Berlin kept looking over their shoulder to the East, fearing to forfeit their share of the loot in the final partition of Poland. As a result, nothing was settled until early 1792, shortly before

the outbreak of war. Count Fersen, a favourite of Marie Antoinette, wrote in January 1792 about German Emperor Leopold, the queen's brother, that "the Emperor is afraid of war, afraid to meddle in your affairs".¹

Leopold's death in March 1792 changed little or nothing in Austria's policy. Apart from everything else, Vienna was afraid of losing Belgium in the event of war. Only the kings of Spain and Sweden were, "on principle", in favour of an intervention, though neither of them could play more than a secondary role in any campaign against the French Revolution.

In the circumstances, England's position was of special significance, yet no one knew what it was. On the eve of the revolution, faithful to the traditions of age-long rivalry, both sides accused each other of seeking supremacy. French Foreign Minister Montmorin wrote that attempts to attain agreement with England would only result in that London would, out of envy and hatred, try to establish its domination over France.² A little earlier, Charles Fox, the Whig leader, speaking in Parliament, accused France of trying to establish its rule over Europe.³

Capture of the Bastille was at first received in London as a triumph of Enlightenment over medieval barbarity. This view predominated among the English public, and was not entirely foreign to governmental spheres. A little over a week after the fall of the Bastille, namely on July 23, 1789, the House of Lords discussed a suggestion to set a day of thanksgiving for so conspicuous a victory of civilisation. If the voting had gone the other way (which was not to be ruled out), Bastille Day would originally have been an English holiday.

Subsequently, right up to the end of 1791, the French Revolution, which had been received with great sympathy in English liberal and democratic

¹ Georges Michon, *Robespierre et la guerre révolutionnaire, 1791-1792*, Marcel Rivière et Cie, Paris, 1937, p. 62.

² John T. Stoker, *William Pitt et la Révolution Française (1789-1793)*, Recueil Sirey, Paris, 1935, pp. 24-25.

³ *The Parliamentary History of England*, Vol. 26, T. C. Hansard, London, 1816, col. 377 ff.

quarters, created conflicting feelings in the upper strata of the ruling class. Doltish George III considered the revolution a fair punishment to the Bourbons for supporting the rebels in the War of Independence in North America. As for the government of William Pitt the Younger, it regarded the French events above all in the context of how they would affect the European balance of power. Pitt and his Foreign Secretary, George Grenville, assumed that the revolution would weaken the positions of France abroad, would cause it to quarrel with the monarchic governments of other European states. Besides, the cabinet of William Pitt the Younger, which scored conspicuous diplomatic victories after recognising the independence of the British colonies, now a new state, the USA, assumed that peace would benefit British industry in its drive for foreign markets.

Indeed, London was not inclined to heed the royalists' pleas for intervention. The British ambassador in Paris, Duke of Dorset, regarded the king's aristocratic entourage as the war party which was seeking to extinguish the revolutionary conflagration inside France by means of an adventure outside it. Even in 1789, Pitt declared without hesitation that only a French invasion of Belgium would serve as a cause for war.¹ Edmund Burke, the prominent Whig politician and writer, was a troubadour of intervention. Already in February 1790, speaking in the House of Commons, he called for a crusade against "an irrational, unprincipled, proscribing, confiscating, plundering, ferocious, bloody and tyrannical democracy".² But at that time his was a voice in the wilderness. Besides, King George III, who could not forget Burke's support of the recent independence struggle of the English colonies, detested that paladin of monarchism. Subsequently, referring to Burke's programme, Pitt said there was "much to admire, and nothing to agree with" in it.³

¹ *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy. 1783-1919*, Vol. I, 1783-1815, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1922, p. 213.

² *The Parliamentary History of England*, Vol. 28, col. 353-367.

³ *The Journal and Correspondence of William, Lord Aycliffe*, Vol. III, Richard Bentley, London, 1862, p. 320.

One day in September 1791, Pitt invited Grenville and Addington, who were members of his cabinet, as well as Burke, to his home. He described as an exaggeration Burke's fears that the "French example" would have an unfavourable effect on the people of England. He told Burke to have no fears and assured him that the English would remain what they were until the Day of Judgement. His guest agreed, but added that he feared a day of no judgement¹. (What Burke hinted at was mob rule.)

Pitt stood his ground. He continued his policy of neutrality. Speaking in the House of Commons in February 1792, he declared there had never been a time in the history of England when, by virtue of the European situation, the country could with more reasonable grounds than now count on 15 years of peace. And when a war did break out on the continent in April 1792, Pitt and Grenville were convinced that France, racked by acute internal struggles, would fail to stand up to the Prusso-Austrian coalition. In June, Grenville wrote: "As soon as the German troops arrive, whatever is the ruling Party at Paris must apply to us to mediate for them."² The British Foreign Secretary expected the war to end with relatively insignificant border changes, and with England retaining its highly advantageous role of guarantor of the European equilibrium. At that time, London thought in terms of the balance of power, not in terms of a new ambient conflict.

After the overthrow of the monarchy in France in August 1792, the British government recalled its ambassador Lord Gower from Paris, though, before his departure, he was instructed to stress that England would maintain its neutrality. Even in November 1792, Grenville held that a foreign intervention would only trigger anarchy and provide an excuse for "disturbances". The English Foreign Secretary went so far as to examine the prospect of recognising the

¹ G. Pellew, *Life and Correspondence of the Right Honourable Henry Addington, First Viscount Sidmouth*, Vol. I., London, p. 72.

² *The Manuscripts of J. B. Fortescue*, Vol. II, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1894, p. 281.

French Republic if the new regime took solid root.

Pitt's government did not abandon the thought of maintaining neutrality right up to the end of 1792, still hoping to come to terms with the French concerning England's interests in Holland and Belgium. Not until January 1793 did it become apparent that these hopes were groundless. Meanwhile, the advocates of war in Paris held that England was on the edge of a revolutionary explosion.

Democratic clubs and societies had, indeed, sprung up in various parts of Britain. But there was no trace of a revolutionary situation. In essence, the advocates of "revolutionary war", including French diplomats, fell for the bait of the Pitt Cabinet which deliberately propagated a "Jacobin threat" in England in order to create a panic among the propertied classes and drag repressive laws against the democratic movement through Parliament. Influenced by advocates of a "revolutionary war", the Convent adopted a number of measures that enabled England to declare itself the defending side and the French revolutionary government a successor to the aggressive plans of Louis XIV.

In February 1793, addressing Parliament, Pitt said the French rulers were trying to make other countries adopt their model of government through "the mouth of their cannon".¹ Obviously, Pitt regarded the conflict with France mainly as yet another war against England's long-time rival. The right wing of the Whigs, on the other hand, such as Burke and Windham, who had joined hands with the government, considered the war against France above all as an intervention, a counter-revolution to restore the old regime.

Need I recall how the counter-revolutionary campaign against France ended. The first invasion of Prussian and Austrian troops was repulsed in the autumn of 1792 when, after the victory at Valmy, the French occupied Belgium. A new onslaught of the anti-French coalition, in which England was the main force, began in 1793.

¹ *The Parliamentary History of England*, Vol. 30, 1817, col. 278.

An uprising (May 31-June 2, 1793) led to a transfer of power from the Girondins to the Jacobins. By that time the interventionists had scored considerable successes. It appeared that, helped by reactionaries in France, they would drown the Jacobin republic in blood. But the Jacobins, who had the backing of the mass of the people, managed to reverse the course of events. Fourteen new armies were formed. Young generals who had covered themselves with glory in battles against the enemy, were put at their head. In the autumn of 1793, the revolutionary troops mounted a counter-offensive at all points.

By the spring of 1794, France was cleared of the enemy. In May and June of that year, the main armed forces of the interventionists were routed in battles at Tourcoing and Fleurus. Quarrels erupted within the coalition. Prussia, which had evaded military action since 1792, demanded more subsidies from the English, and withdrew its troops to Cologne in March 1794 on failing to receive them. Thereupon, with a heavy heart, London decided to fork up. In April 1794, a treaty was signed in The Hague, under which Prussia promised to field a 62,000-man army alongside the Austrians against the advancing French troops. To be sure, instead of keeping this promise, Kaiser Frederick-William II sent 50,000 men to Poland to suppress a rising there under Thaddeus Kosciusko. The intervention against Poland buried all chances of success in the intervention against France. The breakup of the anti-French coalition, delayed for a while by the dispensation of English gold, became an accomplished fact.

We might ask ourselves if the conflict that France had with England, and with the feudal monarchies of continental Europe for that matter, had been inevitable. Initially, it was not so considered either by Robespierre in France or Pitt in England or influential politicians in other European countries. Objectively, their attitude reflected the fact that the revolutionary transition from feudalism to capitalism was inevitable in countries where the requisite conditions had ripened. But neither then nor later had there been any "law" under which this transition was to result from

armed export of revolution clashing with export of counter-revolution.

History never predicated either the one or the other type of "export", though more or less tangible possibilities did exist for them, hinging on the correlation of class forces inside the country and the specificity of the prevailing international relations.

But, decidedly, I cannot agree with the Western historians who maintain that the conflict was caused by mutual incomprehension of each side's motives. One such historian, New York University professor Kyung-Won Kim, maintains that "the introduction of one ideologically dissimilar actor [i.e., of the state—Y.Ch.] led to the increasing malfunctioning of the communications network among international actors. Decision-making in France was no longer the old familiar routine entrusted mainly to select official agents. In a developing revolutionary situation, the King and his ministers were constantly being pushed out of their former control over France's foreign policy by the rising pressure from below. This breakdown of a stable decision-making process in France might have had only a limited impact on international stability if the other powers had understood the dynamics of a revolutionary situation and acted accordingly. Such intellectual capacity was conspicuous by its absence."¹

In Professor Kim's opinion the war broke out because the conservative forces took a traditional view of the events, and reacted to it, as was their custom, in a "balance of power" context. But the war that began in the "power balance" framework tended to further the revolutionary process in France, hastened the collapse of the monarchy, and thereby revolutionised the war.

There is some truth in this view, though it fallaciously overlooks the influence of the Girondin propaganda of "revolutionary war", and the sentiment that ran high among the ruling circles in countries of the anti-French coalition in favour of a counter-revolutionary campaign.

¹ Kyung-Won Kim, *Revolution and the International System*, New York University Press, New York, 1970, p. 49.

Kim asks himself what the foreign policy of conservative governments should be in a revolutionary epoch. His view is that the conservative statesmen should either have kept their noses out of the matter, or organised a truly effective crusade against the revolution at the very outset, as Burke had suggested.

Though particular territorial accessions may not have been pursued in that campaign, Kim holds, it should have been mounted with only one main purpose in mind, that of suppressing the revolution. Yet in 1792 conservative governments, owing to their narrow-mindedness, concentrated their thinking on egoistic advantages and, as a result, contributed to the collapse of the old system of international relations.

Kim is inclined to think that revolutionary France could have been incorporated into the international life of Europe without the quarter of a century of bloodshed "if the conservative statesmen of Europe had understood the nature of the French Revolution correctly and adapted their policies accordingly".¹

The social diversity of the conservative camp affected the lineup of the sides in the new ambient conflict. Apart from forces of the old system it also included countries where the bourgeoisie was already in power and opposed revolutionary methods of introducing the capitalist system in other countries. As a result, a large part of the conservative camp often sought the aims of a bourgeois, rather than feudal, counter-revolution.

Objectively, England stood at the head of a coalition of feudal monarchic states in the struggle against France, where a bourgeois-democratic revolution was taking place. But England, though the organiser of an intervention against a bourgeois revolution, was itself a bourgeois country, which naturally determined the aims which it set itself in the ambient conflict as it sided with authoritarian feudal reaction.

The broader interventionist aims of the feudal governments were compounded with more limited aims pursued in the framework of the old system of international relations destroyed by the revolution.

¹ Kyung-Won Kim, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

What is more, the interventionist aims, too, were often motivated by the desire to restore the European power balance which was thought to have been disrupted by an enfeebled France racked by domestic struggles. (This, indeed, was how one of the motives of the war was defined in a manifesto issued by Frederick-William II of Prussia on June 25, 1792.) Later, after the revolutionary armies had scored victory after victory, the aim of the coalition was not to weaken, but rather to strengthen, France.

The governments of the anti-French coalition camouflaged territorial claims with rhetoric about a power balance. It was this that created fissures, which widened swiftly both under the impact of the early successes and of the subsequent defeats. The successes, which augured victory, prompted the sides to begin counting their chickens before they were hatched, while the setbacks triggered attempts of the planned territorial accessions at the price of betraying the allies.

In England, too, the thinking of statesmen was still governed by the old system of international relations. But their externally limited, even defensive, aims in Europe—above all that of preventing a French occupation of Belgium and Holland—were no more than an expression of a different aim: to safeguard English supremacy on the seas, its commercial predominance, and to further a rapid growth of its colonial possessions. Small wonder that some hotheads publicly proclaimed altogether “global” aims. What was called “A Short Exposition on the Important Advantages to Be Derived by Great Britain from the War”, a treatise published in London’s *The Critical Review* in August 1794, listed among these “advantages” the conquest for at least the next century of a world monopoly on trade and, in effect, the establishment of a world empire.

The 18th-century statesmen had no ideological or “national” aims. That is why, even when involved in the ambient conflict with revolutionary France, reactionary governments did not abandon their expansionist aims, were inevitably prepared to give them precedence over the aim of counter-revolution

whenever faced with such a choice. Kyung-Won Kim, whom I have already cited, holds that "the international system of the eighteenth century lacked an adequate compensating mechanism to deal with revolutionary disturbances, that is, challenges at the level of the system itself".¹ Ideology helped to send the old system to its grave. And not exclusively by setting new aims in foreign policy. As an ideology of social overturn, it generated new means and resources for the achievement of these aims.

From 1793 on, the keys to war and peace in Europe or, more precisely, to the continuation or termination of the armed forms of the ambient conflict, were held by Paris and London. It depended on the political decisions taken in the French and English capitals whether the conflict was given backing or, on the contrary, was brought to an end.

After the 18th Brumaire, Napoleon addressed letters to King George III of England and Emperor Francis II of Austria. He wrote: "Must the war that has for eight years ravaged the four parts of the world, be eternal? How can the two most enlightened nations of Europe ... sacrifice the benefits of commerce and internal prosperity, and the happiness of families, to the ideas of vain grandeur?"²

Austria replied that it would not negotiate separately from its allies. English Foreign Secretary Grenville declared that the restoration of the Bourbons was essential for the war to end. London emphasised the ambient nature of the war, declaring the restoration of the old order in France as its basic aim.

There is no denying, however, that the governments of the Directory, and doubly so the Consulate, were, in effect, a negation of the idea of coexistence, inasmuch as it depended in no small measure on Paris whether or not a relatively lasting peace was concluded with the feudal states without affecting either the new social system or the territorial integrity of France.

¹ Kyung-Won Kim, op. cit., p. 75.

² *Histoire générale du IV^e siècle à nos jours*, Vol. IX, (*Napoléon. 1800-1815*), Armand Colin et Cie, Paris, 1897, p. 40.

The element that cemented the second and the subsequent anti-French coalitions, and even the chief (though not the sole) reason for their emergence was opposition to the French expansionism rather than to the new social system, the revolution, which had already receded into the past.

Western historians tend to compare the Peace of Amiens concluded by London and Paris in 1802, with the Munich deal of 1938 between the governments of Britain and France, on the one hand, and Hitler, on the other, as an example of appeasement (of an aggressor).¹ But that is a misleading comparison. The deal in Munich prodded Nazi aggression eastward against the Soviet Union. While in the early years of the 19th century France, which had only just emerged from the flames of revolution, was in no way pre-ordained to fight Britain and the continental feudal monarchies for still another decade. The Peace of Amiens could easily have been the end of wars that began in 1792. But for France the negation of coexistence was increasingly becoming a pretext for territorial seizures. And observance of the peace treaties concluded by republican France, beginning with the Treaty of Basel in 1795, was incomparably more desirable for the development of the European nations than the continuous wars they went through in the next ten years.

Napoleon adopted the title of emperor to avoid restoring the title of king, which was too closely associated with the old, pre-revolutionary order in the minds of Frenchmen. It would appear that the conversion of the Consulate into an Empire brought the political system of France closer to that of other monarchic states. In fact, however, contemporaries saw this not as a demonstrative break with the revolution, for that break had occurred when the Consulate was first initiated, but as a preparation for new conquests. For Europeans, indeed, it was an obvious staking of claims to the legacy of Charlemagne, to establishing a universal power.

¹ See Ernst L. Presseisen, *Amiens and Munich. Comparisons in Appeasement*, Martinus Nijhoff, London, 1978.

And this conformed with Napoleon's view of the empire. Some 18 months before it was proclaimed, Foreign Minister Talleyrand wrote in an instruction of October 23, 1802, drawn up on the direct orders of Napoleon Bonaparte, First Consul of the French Republic, for Louis-Guillaume Otto, the French commissioner in London, that if England again succeeded in finding allies on the continent, it would compel the French to over-run Europe, and who knew how much time it would take him, Napoleon, to change the face of Europe and restore the Western Empire? It was no accident at all that in later times Napoleon again and again set up his residence in Aachen, the capital of Charlemagne's empire.

In a certain sense (for its social consequences, among other things) the Napoleonic wars were for the countries occupied by Napoleon's troops a continuation and a negation of the contention between the French Republic and the coalitions of the authoritarian feudal states. This even affected official French propaganda which continuously emphasised the "liberative" mission of the French army, on the one hand, and openly associated it with clearly imperial, predatory aims, on the other, including the replacement of previous monarchs by the relatives and intimates of Napoleon. The Napoleonic wars were, as a result, a negation of the struggle in the framework of the ambient conflict, and simultaneously of the coexistence of states with different social and political systems.

Antipodes That Resemble Each Other

In the 18th century, wrote Karl von Clausewitz, the eminent military theorist, the people had no immediate part to play in a war. Yet in a revolution, combating the enemy was a cause of the people, and as a result, a force appeared of which no one yet had any idea.¹ The people joined the struggle under the slogan of independence and the nation's rights.

¹ General von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, B. Behr's Verlag, Berlin, 1918, pp. 622, 625.

In the 18th century, the concept of nation took shape in close association with the ideas of the Enlightenment. In January 1789, Emmanuel Sieyès, ideologue of the bourgeoisie, declared in his famous pamphlet, "Qu'est-ce que le Tiers Etat?", that the third estate "includes all those who comprise the nation; and all those who do not belong to the third estate cannot regard themselves as being of the nation".¹ Monarchic quarters, however, tried to put a different construction on the concept of nation. The *Mercure de France*, which was their mouthpiece, wrote in 1765 that "our *patrie* is in our king united with his subjects".²

Love of country and of one's people in the fight for national liberation, has prompted heroic exploits of undying glory. Patriotic ideals inspired the works of thinkers and artists, and imbued the greatest works of the human genius with an ardent patriotic sentiment. At the same time, most of the abominations in history were committed in the name of the supreme interests of nations.

There is an abyss between "national feelings" and patriotism, on the one hand, and reactionary nationalism, that is, the ideology and policy of the ruling classes in the capitalist epoch, on the other. On the face of it, these antipodes often look the same. Among the reasons for their resemblance is mimicry, the mimicry to which ideologues of reactionary nationalism always resort. Even in the relatively early stages of the making of nations we can spot the embryo of the idea of exclusiveness. Oliver Cromwell, for example, declared in one of his speeches (1655) that the people of England "had a stamp upon them from God".³ During the French Revolution, English reactionary propaganda beamed to "commoners" made extensive use of national strife and deep-rooted

¹ Emmanuel Sieyès, *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers Etat?*, Société de l'Histoire de la Révolution française, Paris, 1888, p. 32.

² Frances Acomb, *Anglophobia in France 1763-1789*, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, 1950, p. 54.

³ *The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell with Elucidations by Thomas Carlyle*, ed. by S. C. Lomas, Vol. 11, Methuen and Co., London, 1904, p. 404.

prejudices, to excite hatred of the Jacobins. Historical references were used to prove that Frenchmen were the "eternal enemies" of the English nation.¹

To the French Enlightenment, who dreamed of universal brotherhood, any emphatic expression of national feelings was a form of fanaticism. As Albert Mathiez, the famous French historian, once observed, these sentiments did not appear strange to Frenchmen of that era, who "did not yet consider it necessary to parade any profound hatred of other nations".² The attitude of the German Enlightenment towards nationalism was, indeed, the same.³

But even during the years of the revolution there began to surface the reverse side of the national ideology of the then still progressive bourgeoisie, reflecting its essence as an exploiting class.

In the arduous and uneasy winter of 1793/1794, when the Jacobin republic strained all its sinews in combating the coalition of external and internal enemies, the Convent, which had hundreds of other urgent matters to attend to, saw fit to deal with the problem of national minorities. Speaking in the Convent on January 27, 1794, Bertrand Barère, a member of the revolutionary government, declared, "Today I am going to draw your attention to the most beautiful language of Europe, which was the first to consecrate the rights of man and citizen, which is called upon to inform the world of the most sublime thoughts on liberty and of the grandest political ideas."

Barère rejected all the contemporary European languages, acknowledging only one language—the French.

"Leave the Italian language to the delights of har-

¹ *Proceedings of the Association for Preserving Liberty and Property Against Republicans and Levellers*, London, 1792.

² Albert Mathiez, "Pacifisme et nationalisme au XVIII^e siècle", in *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, No. 73, January-February 1936, p. 4.

³ Hans Kohn, *Prelude to Nation-States. The French and German Experience, 1789-1815*, Van Nostrand Company, Princeton, New Jersey, 1967, p. 3; Boyd C. Shafer, *Nationalism. Myth and Reality*, Harcourt, Brace and Co., New York, 1955, pp. 132, etc.

mony and the expression of a soft and corrupt poet. Leave the German language for it is unfit for free peoples until the time when the feudal and military government, whose fitting instrument it is, is destroyed. Leave the Spanish language to its Inquisition and its universities until it expresses the banishment of the Bourbons who have deprived the peoples of all Spain of power. As for the English language, which was great and free, until it enriched itself with the words 'majesty of the people' it is no more than the idiom of a tyrannical and execrable government of banks and bills of exchange."¹

Barère lacked the quasi-scientific argument which the 19th-century linguists utilised in pleading the superiority of their respective national tongues over all others. But he got by very well without it. For Barère was an adroit and ambitious person, a careerist who very soon conspired against the revolution, joined the counter-revolutionary coup of the 9th Thermidor, and subsequently became a paid promoter and spy of Napoleon and even of foreign diplomats.

The slogans of international equality and fraternity inscribed on the banners of the revolutionary army were a powerful stimulant for the development of the national identity of peoples awakening from centuries of dormancy.

The idea of tearing down national barriers, which originated with the overthrow of tyrants, acquired an entirely new meaning as the wars of liberation fought under the impact of the French Revolution turned into imperialist wars of the Thermidorians and Napoleon. In effect, it became the ideological vindication of seizures and forcible attempts of the "great nation" (France) assimilating the populations of captured territories. The Belgians, for example, were simply declared Frenchmen. On October 1, 1795, Belgium was formally incorporated in France and divided into departments. The extirpation of feudalism in political and public life was here accompanied by loss of na-

¹ *Archives parlementaires de 1787 à 1860*, First series, Vol. LXXXIII, Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Paris, 1961, pp. 713, 716.

tional independence, of various tokens of the national identity, and even the eradication of old toponyms. "The word [Belgian] lost its national meaning and was nothing but a geographical notion," wrote Belgian historian Henri Pirenne.¹

The "national" idea was backed by another one, opposite in meaning on the face of it—the idea of natural frontiers, for France the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees. The Directory, it is true, wanted the frontier to run not along the Rhine but along its other bank—so that French navigators would not have to deal with foreign authorities, and, too, the fortresses on the right bank should be in French hands, for otherwise the Rhine, covered by guns belonging to a foreign country, would be worthless.

In sum, the left bank of the Rhine was to be a barrier to foreign invasion, both banks were needed to defend that barrier, and the fortresses on the right bank were to protect the barrier to the barrier.²

The same applied to a number of other areas incorporated in France. But what is no less important is that "in its early stages, the leaders of the French Revolution did not claim kinship with French nationalism but with the cosmopolitanism of their masters, the *philosophers*". This we learn from G. A. Chevallaz's study, "The Vienna Treaty and the Shaping of Europe". Chevallaz goes on to say: "But the high-minded universalism professed by the Paris revolutionaries contained within itself, by way of reaction, all the nationalism of Europe."³

Bourgeois historians, I might add, who identify struggle for national independence (and, in general, struggle for national interests) with nationalism, like to operate with the following, externally striking, concept: the French Revolution, which was generated by the Enlightenment with its faith in the triumph of

¹ Henri Pirenne, *Histoire de Belgique*, Vol. VI, Maurice Lamertin, Brussels, 1926, p. 74.

² Sydney Seymour Biro, *The German Policy of Revolutionary France*, Vol. II, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1957, pp. 965-966.

³ G. A. Chevallaz, "The Vienna Treaty and the Shaping of Europe", in *The Congress of Vienna and Europe*, Editions Brepols, Brussels, Paris, 1964, p. 121.

internationalist humanism, has in fact abdicated these ideals and ushered in the “era of nationalism”.

This was put down in a series of special studies by the US historian Hans Kohn. The same is set forth in the works of English Professor Alfred Cobban, who blended sharp charges against the Enlightenment with the idea that the Revolution had been its ideological negation. The Revolution, to quote Cobban, “strayed from the primrose path of enlightened happiness to the strait and narrow road of Jacobin virtue ... from the philosophers’ ideal of peace to the revolutionaries’ crusading war and the Napoleonic dream of conquest”.¹

We read the same thing in many works of Friedrich Meinecke, Gerhard Ritter, and other prominent present-day West German historians. But this conclusion has little to do with the reality. It is wrong to identify “national movement” and “nationalism”, as they are identified by bourgeois historians. In its way, nationalism was a response to national movements awakened by the Great French Revolution, and to the nationalism of the post-Revolution French bourgeoisie.

Napoleon was not infected with French nationalism. True, his propaganda glorified the “great nation”, but only as “bearer of the ideas of equality”, not as a nation of superior inborn qualities. Admittedly, he drew a line of distinction between the “old departments” (France proper) and territories directly or indirectly incorporated in his vast empire. This was where we see the essence of his policy—to exploit conquered lands in the interests of the French big bourgeoisie.

While flirting with the national principle when this was in his interests, Napoleon refused to reckon with it when retailoring the map of Europe. At the same time, he underrated the potentialities of the national liberation struggle, despite the warnings of his subordinates (e.g., those of Marshal Davout, who in 1811 led the troops in Hamburg). Napoleon’s mode of action was contrary to the trends of social development even when it appeared to coincide with the aims of

¹ Alfred Cobban, *Aspects of the French Revolution*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1968, pp. 27-28.

French imperial policy. For one thing, it would seem that to restore Poland, which could have been made the buttress of France in Eastern Europe, was in the interests of imperial France. In fact, however, Napoleon used the Polish question as a bargaining chip in his bid to achieve the main goal, that of defeating England and asserting French hegemony over Europe (and then also the world). To fit these objectives, Polish lands were taken from one set of countries and turned over to another, were put under the immediate control of Napoleon's viceroys, were the object of plans hatched in Paris to change them into vassal kingdoms—and all this in total disregard of the national interests of the Poles themselves.

Thaddeus Kosciuszko warned his countrymen at the end of 1807 not to trust Napoleon's plans. Napoleon, he said, hated the national consciousness (of whatever nation), and still more the spirit of independence.

Napoleon's invasion of Spain was another case in hand. In 1793, Spain went to war against revolutionary France. Poorly supplied and poorly led, the Spanish army suffered a series of grave setbacks. In 1795, Madrid hastily concluded peace with the triumphant adversary, getting away cheaply by conceding to him just the Spanish part of the island of Santo Domingo. Thereupon, Spain was drawn as a junior partner into the wars of Thermidorian and Napoleonic France against England. For this it paid with the loss of its navy, and became increasingly dependent on its strong, unceremonious and arrogant ally. As we see, the people of Spain, originally embroiled in the crusade against the French Revolution, experienced the bitter taste of national oppression, were made to take part in wars for alien interests, and finally compelled to fight for their country's independence.

By the end of the 18th and the early 19th century, the Spanish Bourbons descended to the same degree of degeneration as their predecessors, the Hapsburgs, a century before. "Imbeciles *sans* flesh, *sans* heart, *sans* sentiment," was how the Comtesse d'Albany, who knew the royal family well, referred to them. Members of the family are portrayed with inexorable

truth in Goya's famous painting. King Charles IV, tall and portly, with jutting jaw and cow's eyes, was a busy man. He went hunting from 9 to 12 a.m. and from 2 to 5 p.m. daily, regardless of the weather, and had no inclination at all to take an interest in anything else, save perhaps repairing clocks and watches. Despite his genial appearance, he was unusually cruel and was, on top of this, a benighted ignoramus (e.g., a score of years after the constitution of the USA, Charles could not get this fact into his head and kept naming the US minister a representative of the colonies). He bore without demur the yoke of his imperious spouse, Maria Louisa of Parma, also of the house of the Spanish Bourbons, an ugly shrew who patronised her lovers from among the soldiers of the guard.

One of these lovers, Manuel de Godoy, a fat man with sleepy eyes and the manners of a satyr, put the queen under his power and even charmed her husband, the royal cuckold, who called him his "best and dearest friend". "Donde está mi Manuelito?" the king would inquire if he did not see his favourite for a day or two. The queen promised Godoy that his glory would last as long as the sky and earth. Promoted from a lowly guardsman to first minister practically overnight, and honoured with all sorts of distinctions, orders and titles, Godoy was unable, however, to comprehend that Prussia and Russia were not one and the same country.

Alquier, ambassador of the French Republic, reported that the first minister was marked by mainly two qualities—general ignorance, and a great propensity to lying. And Beauharnais, who was Napoleon's ambassador, produced a somewhat fuller description, portraying Godoy as "voluptuous, lazy, timorous, timid, and greedy", who "sold all official positions".¹ After getting to know Godoy, Napoleon said, "He has the air of a bull".²

The policy of Godoy, who fawned upon Napoleon, caused general disaffection. And the disaffected

¹ Gabriel H. Lovett, *Napoleon and the Birth of Modern Spain*, Vol. I, New York University Press, 1965, p. 14.

² André Castelot, *Talleyrand ou le cynisme*, Librairie académique Perrin, Paris, 1980, p. 287.

pinned their hopes upon the heir apparent, Prince Ferdinand (it was not known then to what extent he had inherited the qualities of his parents). On March 18, 1808, a mass rising deposed Godoy. Ferdinand was proclaimed king. Napoleon's army, which, as Spain's ally, was fighting against the Portuguese and the English troops that had landed in Portugal, gradually occupied all Spain. At the advice of marshal of France Joachim Murat, Charles IV and Maria Louisa appealed to Napoleon for protection. The emperor suggested that they come to Bayonne (in the south of France), and they came with their sole and incomparable friend, Godoy. The interesting thing was that Murat and Savary, chief of the French secret service, managed to prevail on Charles IV's son to accompany his parents, because, they said, Napoleon would settle all disputed issues to Ferdinand's complete satisfaction.

During Ferdinand's interview with his parents, which occurred in Napoleon's presence, members of the royal family vilified each other, and almost stooped to fisticuffs. Even Bonaparte, the stern conqueror, was embarrassed. "What sort of people are they?" he exclaimed on the way back to his apartments after the scene. By promises and threats, Napoleon forced the Bourbons to abdicate their rights to the Spanish Crown in favour of his brother, Joseph Bonaparte.

At great risk and with considerable difficulties, Spanish patriots managed to evade the vigilant French police and deliver money to Ferdinand for his flight to Spain. But he was true to the family tradition. Upon taking the money, he at once in a fawning letter asked Napoleon for the hand of his niece. The emperor responded by ordering Talleyrand to place Ferdinand in one of his castles. And Ferdinand joyously attended all celebrations marking the emperor's victories. In April 1810, he even said to the commander of the castle that he would be glad to become Napoleon's adopted son.

In 1808, Talleyrand urged Napoleon to start his Spanish adventure which, in fact, he considered needless and dangerous. And to justify his Spanish plan,

Talleyrand found arguments based on what he assumed to be the resemblance of Napoleon's policy to that of the previous claimants to European supremacy. One of Napoleon's intimates, Etienne Denis de Pasquier, recalls that Talleyrand said: "Ever since Louis XIV, the Spanish Crown has belonged to the family that reign in France... It is still the finest part of the great king's heritage, and the Emperor must get that heritage complete; he should not and must not abandon any part of it."¹

It remained to be seen how Spain would receive all this. Napoleon's spies drew up detailed accounts of its army, navy, and administration. What they overlooked, however, was the nation's mood and spirit. Napoleon judged of the country by its worthless royal court. But while Spain's government and administration were in fact lifeless, Spanish society was full of life.

On May 2, 1808, a rising erupted in Madrid against French troops in the capital. Marshal Murat suppressed it brutally. What had been a predatory war from the outset and developed into a counter-revolutionary intervention, Napoleon passed off as a new chapter in society's fight against feudalism. In July 1808, the Spanish grandees who had come to Bayonne, formally approved a new constitution. Spain was proclaimed a constitutional monarchy. A public judiciary was introduced, torture abolished, internal customs duties revoked, and a single civic and commercial legislation initiated. While it did not restrict the powers of Joseph Bonaparte, who was declared king, and consequently those of the French emperor, the constitution contained provisions that were likely to further the country's progress along bourgeois lines.

On July 20, 1808, Joseph Bonaparte entered Madrid, whence he wrote to Napoleon: "Sire, I am not frightened of my position, but it is unique in history: I don't have a single follower here."

The whole country, indeed, rose up against the French. On July 31, eleven days after entering the capital, Joseph was compelled to abandon it and retreat north across the Ebro. Of Joseph Bonaparte

¹ André Castelot, *op. cit.*, p. 292.

Napoleon said thereafter that he was the most incompetent of men, the very opposite to what was needed.

In November 1808, the French emperor went to Spain at the head of a large army and broke the backbone of the Spanish regular army in a 72-day campaign. A month after he began the campaign, he took Madrid, and at once issued a set of important decrees, abolishing feudal rights and the Inquisition, reducing by two-thirds the number of monasteries, and so on. Seigniorial justice was abolished on December 12. A few days before, on December 7, in an address to the people of Spain, Napoleon stressed his "rights" as conqueror, and declared: "I'll destroy everything that hinders your prosperity and your grandeur... A liberal constitution will give you a moderate constitutional monarchy in place of an authoritarian monarchy."¹

This was a bid to portray the suppression of the Spanish people's liberation movement as a struggle for the institution in Spain of what were for those times progressive social and political reforms. And it is only fair to note that to a certain extent this tactic did pay off, because not only unprincipled and acquisitive men followed the French, but also a segment of the liberal-minded bourgeoisie and landlords who saw the French army as a means to secure by evolution the new social order that it would otherwise take a people's revolution to set up. But the people would not follow these "afrancesados".

Though Napoleon's decrees would doubtless have been a big step forward in Spain's social development (in the political field, of course, all constitutional reforms would have been no more than a screen for the French emperor's despotic rule), they were resolutely turned down by the people of Spain for whom they were the price for renouncing national independence. To retain control over the country, Napoleon had had to keep a huge army there of 300,000 men.

The liberal manoeuvres, however, did yield one incontestable result. The corteses in Cadiz, the only

¹ *Correspondance de Napoléon I-er*, Vol. 18, Henri Plon, Paris, 1865, Nos. 14526-14529, 14537, 14555.

large city not seized by Napoleon's troops, were compelled to consider the progressive innovations in the occupied part of the country. That was one of the factors which led to the adoption of the famous 1812 Cadiz Constitution that proclaimed the principle of popular supremacy. This constitution, Marx noted, was modelled on the ancient *fueros* (rights and privileges of medieval towns and estates), read, however, as Marx put it, "in the light of the French Revolution and adapted to the wants of modern society".¹

French rule in Spain collapsed before the final breakdown of the Napoleonic empire. Ferdinand, released from French bondage in March 1814, returned to Spain. The first thing he did was renounce everything he had previously promised. He revoked the 1812 Constitution, restored royal absolutism, and restored the feudal arrangements and institutions. The corteses elected under the 1812 Constitution were dissolved. A starkly reactionary regime took hold across the country.

Previous attempts at uniting Europe as a universal monarchy were made by the reactionary camp and under reactionary slogans. The first such attempt associated with historically progressive social change was made under Napoleon. But this did not prevent it from colliding with the insuperable tendencies of historical development: the emergence on the capitalist (bourgeois) basis of nation-states.

Napoleon's policy had but one objective result: the French conquerors' progressive measures invigorated the national consciousness and identity of the conquered, and also their national movements against the conquerors.

As from 1801, Napoleon retailed the map of the Holy Roman Empire. This led to the abolition of a multitude of minor states. It promoted the idea of German unity and, in the final analysis, generated a movement against Napoleon's dominance. Besides, it enabled the feudal monarchic forces to exploit the national movements in their own interests. The reac-

¹ Karl Marx, "Revolutionary Spain", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, 1980, p. 429.

tionary camp benefited, because the historically progressive camp was headed by the bourgeoisie which even at that early time followed a policy that reflected its aspirations as an exploiting class. Renunciation of the coexistence principle turned the national idea against France for a time, and partly even against bourgeois progress.

The contradictory nature of the ambient conflict could be traced to the fact that the struggle continuously crossed its limits. The defensive wars of the French Revolution turned into imperialist wars of the Thermidorians and of Napoleon. The counter-revolutionary campaign of monarchic states against France gave place to wars of liberation against Napoleonic conquests.

In the eras of transition from one socio-economic arrangement to another, claims to universal supremacy within the limits of the continent or even on a wider scale inevitably led to renunciation of the principle of coexistence of countries with different political systems. This is vividly illustrated by the history of the Napoleonic empire.

Napoleon's wars of conquest directed at the institution of an all-European empire with its centre in Paris, were, in effect, a variety of the countless predatory (including colonial) wars fought by feudal and bourgeois states. The special feature of the Napoleonic wars was that they were fought by a country which had only just carried out its bourgeois revolution, and against countries (objects of conquest) where the old, feudal social system still prevailed and that the French invasion was accompanied by "export" of the new bourgeois arrangements rather than of revolution—this being done by administrative fiat and not by economic means. Soon enough, it became clear that such "export" had far more negative than positive sides to it.

Napoleon's imperialist wars were not, however, altogether bereft of progressive aspects—true to an ever less extent—alongside the reactionary ones. And the struggles of the European nations against Napoleon, too, were marked by a blend of the spirit of renaissance and of reaction. The bearers of the progressi-

ve tendency were the mass of the working people, the democratic segments of society. The reactionary tendency was represented by the feudal monarchic governments that headed the struggle. Owing to this dual nature of the wars against Napoleon, the victory of the nations put power over the European continent into the hands of absolutist feudal reactionaries who also opposed the principle of coexistence, though from their own, specific angle.

Napoleon was quick to grasp the dual nature of the wars then fought by France. He saw it during the Italian campaign of 1796-1797, and decided to exploit it for his own ends. Years later, when in exile on Saint Helena, he wrote that the struggle of kings against the republic had been a struggle of two systems: the oligarchies reigning in London, Vienna and St Petersburg came to grips with the Paris republicans. Napoleon decided to change the situation in which France was always the isolated, solitary party, and flung the apple of discord into the midst of the coalitions in order to change the approach, to create other motivations and other interests. Nor did Napoleon as yet renounce use of revolutionary slogans, but always stressed that in diplomatic negotiations none but territorial issues, economic interests, and strategic considerations had any real meaning.

In 1800, the feudal monarchic principles did not prevent Paul I, the Russian tsar, from entering into an alliance with First Consul Bonaparte. This line was also followed by Alexander I, though with some vacillation prompted by non-ideological motives. But when plans of an alliance between Paris and St Petersburg collapsed (mainly through the fault of Napoleon himself) and Russia joined a new anti-French coalition, Alexander I insisted that the latter should renounce the slogan of restoring the old order in France and declare that what it opposed was Napoleon and his policy of conquests.

Or take this other example dating to a slightly later time. Former Napoleonic Marshal Bernadotte who became heir to the throne of Sweden as Charles John and commander of the Northern allied army operating against Napoleon, declared to his soldiers on

August 15, 1813: "The same sentiments that guided the French in 1792 and that prompted them to unite and fight against armies that were on their territory, must now direct your valour against those who, having overrun your native land, are enslaving your brothers, your women, and your children."¹

It is only natural, therefore, that the ideologue of the anti-French coalitions, Friedrich von Gentz, motivated the new war against France in 1805 not with the aim of restoring the old regime in France and the regions it had conquered in Europe, but with the aim of restoring the pre-revolution balance of power. The aim was said to be not to restore the social and political system, but only the system of international relations that had existed before the Revolution. And that system was in a certain sense based on the coexistence of proto-bourgeois and feudal states.

A Penetrating Cynicism

The reputations of Talleyrand, who had "always sold all those who bought him", and Joseph Fouché, who turned from the most left of all lefts among the Jacobins into a millionaire whom Napoleon awarded the title of Duc d'Otrante and who was minister of police both of the Empire and of the restored Bourbons, have taken deep root. And it is unlikely anyone will be able to alter those reputations, though historians do make such attempts from time to time.

But the question of whether the assessments of their activity are given in the right historical perspective is not as simple to answer as it may seem. The unenviable reputation of both Talleyrand and Fouché infers that they had in some things departed far from the "standards" of behaviour practised by the politicians of those days. But is that really so? Is it not clear that fidelity to principle was not the kind of quality that would enable anyone not only to survive the many swings of the political pendulum to right

¹ *Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiyi*, f. Kantseliariya, d. 10837, l. 77 (Archive of Russian Foreign Policy).

and left, but also to retain sufficiently high posts, to retain power, under the successive regimes.

The revolutionaries who survived the 9th Thermidor, who refused to become involved in the madness of acquisition and pillage under the Directory, and who could not reconcile themselves with the 18th Brumaire, went to the guillotine or were banished to Cayenne Island, where they fell prey to tropical fever, the "yellow guillotine", or were thrown into prison or, at best, totally fenced off from political life. None succeeded in retaining his position and influence, and in maintaining his principles to boot. Of Lazare Carnot, who said he had managed it, Engels sarcastically noted that no "decent fellow has been known to have bluffed his way, as he did, through Thermidor, Fructidor, Brumaire, etc.". ¹ By these standards, Talleyrand and Fouché differed from their colleagues only in greater intelligence, greater farsightedness, cunning and impudence, and greater skill in capitalising on political change, in making themselves indispensable to every new regime. And among all these qualities the main one, of course, was their extraordinary statesmanship, their ability to see farther than most other people, their political perspicacity or intuition—all of which were none the less effective serving personal egoistic aims.

For all their apparent distinctions, both the haughty member of one of France's most distinguished aristocratic families and the shrewd police detective from the bottom rungs of the social ladder, were most amazingly similar in things that mattered most, and, of course, both of them saw through each other and hated each other if only for that one reason. Hinting at Fouché's moves to extend police inquisitiveness to new areas, Talleyrand observed:

"The Minister of Police is a man who first meddles in what concerns him, and then also in what does not concern him."

Hearing someone say that Fouché despised all peo-

¹ Frederick Engels, "Conditions and Prospects of the Holy Alliance Against France in 1852", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, 1978, p. 546.

ple, Talleyrand was quick to observe:

“No doubt the man has studied his own self.”

And Fouché got his own back:

“There’s a cell in the Temple prison to lock up M. de Talleyrand when the time comes.”

Then, quite unexpectedly, at the height of Napoleon’s Spanish campaign, the two enemies let bygones be bygones. The covert opposition to Napoleon displayed by Talleyrand and Fouché, those two highest ranked and most capable dignitaries of the Empire, was prompted by their political farsightedness. It did not originate from the emperor’s disfavour (which was the effect, not the cause, of the secret intrigues of his two most intelligent and perspicacious ministers) nor from any hostility they may have had towards the emperor. Neither Fouché nor Talleyrand could seriously count on winning anything from the emperor’s downfall or on claiming first place in the state.

In the final analysis, all their moves were aimed at obtaining guarantees for themselves in the event of Napoleon’s downfall, for he was laying himself open to it by his unbridled policy of conquests, an inevitable side-effect, as it were, of his one-man dictatorship.

It did not take much intelligence to realise that the worst that could happen to Talleyrand and Fouché was the restoration of the Bourbons, no matter how adroitly these two former activists of the Revolution flirted with royalist emissaries. In that respect, they both belonged to the fairly large, though amorphous, group of Napoleon’s upper and medium level officials. They held that any regime that may come to replace the Empire must have some sort of association with the Revolution so as to guarantee the inviolability of the new, bourgeois arrangements and, certainly, the place of those who represented these arrangements in political life.

As a result, their purely egoistic interests prompted people like Talleyrand and Fouché to look for a possible alternative to the Napoleonic regime, that would more conclusively quench the thirst of bourgeois France for greater stability.

To achieve greater stability, the new regime would have had to relinquish its adventurous foreign policy and yet establish a peace under which it would retain as much as possible of the gains of the past years. "I cannot," Napoleon wrote to Talleyrand in September 1806, "have any of the great European powers as an ally."¹ Talleyrand was aware that Napoleon's victories reduced French diplomacy's ability to play on the contradictions between the great powers. When the imperial minister received word of the crushing defeat suffered by the Prussians at Jena and Auerstadt, he exclaimed that they deserved no sympathy but that Europe would go under together with them.

Prior to 1806, Talleyrand saw the greatest danger to France's political stability in Napoleon's possible death on the battlefield or at the hands of an assassin. Thereafter, he saw Napoleon and his unbridled plans of conquest as the greatest danger. Fouché, the newly created Duke of Otrante, arrived at similar conclusions. I agree with one of his latest (largely apologetic) biographers, Ray Ellsworth Cubberly, who wrote Napoleon's Minister of Police "realized that France urgently needed peace to consolidate the great gains of the French Revolution".²

The new France of the victorious bourgeoisie needed a more reliable backing for its gains, a backing that would make for more effective use of the results of victory—something that the Napoleonic regime denied it.

Talleyrand saw the interests of the new, bourgeois France more clearly and more promptly than others. And defended them when they coincided with his own interests. Which they did fairly often. Prince Talleyrand was aware that to go against the interests of the bourgeoisie, even if this augured a here-and-now profit, could turn out a great loss in the long run. He therefore always sought a solution that would at once benefit his own interests and those of France

¹ Albert Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution française*, 7th Part, Plon, Paris, 1949, p. 70.

² Ray Ellsworth Cubberly, *The Role of Fouché During the Hundred Days*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1969, p. 124.

as conceived by the new rising class of capitalists.

In March 1805, in the emperor's presence, Talleyrand spoke before the Senate about Napoleon's coming coronation as King of Italy. He said he disagreed with the then frequent comparison made between Napoleon and Charlemagne or Alexander the Great. "Frivolous and deceptive analogies," he declaimed. "Charlemagne was a conqueror and not a founder... Alexander, who continuously widened the limits of his conquests, only prepared for himself a bloody funeral." Napoleon, on the other hand, Talleyrand declared, "wants nothing but to assert the ideas of order in France and peace in Europe". Addressing the emperor directly, he exclaimed: "France and Italy cherish you as maker of their laws and protector of their rights and power. Europe reveres in you the champion of its interests."¹

When a new anti-French coalition went to war against Napoleon in consequence of France annexing Genoa and establishing the kingdom of Italy with Napoleon as king, contrary to previously concluded treaties, Talleyrand declared in the Senate on September 23, 1805: "The Emperor is obliged to repulse an unjust aggression which he had applied himself vainly to prevent."

Still, on the eve of Austerlitz (as Talleyrand maintained later, in 1807), Talleyrand had recommended Napoleon to follow a "moderate" programme: to consolidate religion, morality and order in France, establish peaceful relations with England, fortify the eastern frontier by creating a Confederation of the Rhine, make Italy a state independent of Austria and of France, and use Poland as a natural barrier to contain the Russian tsar. Even after Austerlitz, Talleyrand advised Napoleon to make peace and form a close alliance with Austria.

Prince Talleyrand jested: "I am constantly compelled to negotiate not with Europe but with Bonaparte!"

In the autumn of 1808, upon returning from the Erfurt meeting of the two emperors, Napoleon of

¹ André Castelot, op. cit., p. 236.

France and Alexander I of Russia, Talleyrand gave Klemens Metternich, the Austrian ambassador, to understand that it was in the interests of France itself for the powers opposing Napoleon to join hands and put an end to his insatiable ambitions. He explained that Napoleon's cause was no longer the cause of France, and that, in fact, Europe could be saved only by a close alliance between Austria and Russia. Arriving in Vienna in 1809, after the breach of relations with France, Metternich repeated the words Talleyrand had impressed upon him: "France has made no war since the Peace of Lunéville [of 1801—*Y.Ch.*]. It is Napoleon who makes war with French resources."¹ (Practically at the same time, Talleyrand wrote to Napoleon: "It is thirteen days that Your Majesty has been absent and has added six victories to the marvellous history of your preceding campaigns... Your glory, Sire, is our pride, but our very existence hangs upon your life.") Shortly before the 1812 campaign, Talleyrand summed up: "He, Napoleon, preferred to give his name to his adventures instead of giving it to his century."²

The die was cast. In March 1814, Talleyrand and Karl von Dalberg, primate of the Rhine Confederation, sent their agent, Baron de Vitrolles, through Switzerland to the camp of the allies. To prove his identity, Baron de Vitrolles was to give the names of two Vienna ladies whose favours Dalberg shared with Nesselrode, a tsarist diplomat. The parole proved convincing. Talleyrand's advice to the allies passed on by Vitrolles was not to negotiate with Napoleon, but move directly against Paris, and put the Bourbon dynasty back on the French throne. The latter part of the recommendation can hardly be taken as a model of political farsightedness, but at that moment it appeared best suited to Talleyrand's personal advantage and careerist plans.

¹ André Castelot, *op. cit.*, pp. 332-333, 351.

² Jean Savant, *Talleyrand*, Librairie Jules Tallandier, Paris, 1960, p. 201.

Controversy over the Holy Alliance

It is no exaggeration to say that the Netherlands Revolution exercised its greatest influence on Europe's social and economic development after the ambient conflict was at last over. The bourgeois revolution in England, too, as a revolution on a European scale, was able to exercise its influence precisely with the ending of that conflict. More, the most profound influence of the Great French Revolution falls not to the period of France's military confrontation with coalition of feudal monarchic states but to the several succeeding decades.

Lenin stressed that "the entire development of civilised humanity throughout the nineteenth century sprang from the Great French Revolution, and was indebted to it for everything",¹ and referred to the 19th century as a time "which gave civilisation and culture to the whole of mankind".² That the opportunities for public and cultural progress which arose with the French Revolution could be carried into effect on such a scale and at so rapid a rate was due to the absence of an ambient conflict during most of the 19th century.

What were the roots of the relative stability of the system of international relations created by the Vienna Congress of 1815, that most reactionary assembly of monarchs after the overthrow of the Napoleonic empire? The opinions of historians vary on this point. Probably because the answer must cover not one but a whole set of reasons, weight of each of which is hard to evaluate accurately.

Some of the reasons leap to the eye. The contours of Napoleonic Europe vanished with the collapse of the empire. In the anti-Napoleonic camp, however, the peoples that had risen to liberate themselves, and the feudal monarchic governments that happened to head their struggle, pursued objectively different aims,

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Report at the Second All-Russia Trade Union Congress", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, 1977, p. 423.

² V. I. Lenin, "First All-Russia Congress on Adult Education", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, 1977, p. 371.

though this contradiction was well concealed for a time by the war fought against an alien invader. Napoleon's policy had hindered rather than promoted the emergence of independent nation-states upon a bourgeois foundation. But after Napoleon was put down, this was still more resolutely opposed by feudal monarchic reaction. By that time, the concealed contradiction between the monarchic governments and the forces that had brought about the victory could not but rise to the surface. An unavoidable collision occurred between the aspirations to social progress which had prompted the peoples to fight their wars of liberation, and the reactionary ideas of restoring feudal authoritarian monarchies put down in the principles of the Holy Alliance.

Legitimism was declared the principle underlying the new recarving of Europe's map, with what were said to be lawful monarchs being put back on their thrones and their hereditary possessions given back to them.

The most typical feature of the reactionary camp was its inability to look the truth in the face and acknowledge the main realities of the times. Though, of course, this did not prevent the most capable members of the reactionary camp from displaying considerable skill at political manoeuvring. Legitimism was the sort of ideology which, though much behind the times, was for a while capable of working in the interests of feudal absolutist reaction and the particular interests of particular governments (such as the French Bourbons, for example, in 1814-1815), since in the eyes of its practicians the legitimist principle was a rule with exceptions, which were shaped to suit the interests of particular powers.

That the restoration (not only in France but also in other European countries) was only partial was emphasised by the fact that the fundamentals of bourgeois civil law were preserved, and that the abolition of church lands and the dissolution of a multitude of petty principalities and independent cities in Germany and Italy were reaffirmed. The principle of legitimism was also evaded when the partition of Poland and of Saxony were legalised.

But the plea of legitimacy survived for a long time, shifting gradually from the political sphere to the sphere of amusing incidents. According to a legitimist calendar put out nearly a hundred years after the Vienna Congress (early in this century) the English throne was occupied by an unknown Mary IV Stuart, the Pope was still head of a theocratic state that had, in fact, been incorporated in the Italian Kingdom back in 1870, while Italy itself was territorially reduced to a quarter of its size and the Italian king was named king of Sardinia, and Frankfurt am Main was not part of the German Empire but a free city, etc.

To be sure, even now in the 1980s, a secret *Ordre de la Couronne des Stuart* still exists with the aim, of all things, to restore the Stuarts, overthrown by the "glorious revolution" of 1688, on the British throne.¹

Though the monarchs gathered at the Vienna Congress recarved the map of Europe on the legitimist principle and ignored the national, the vital interests of a considerable portion of European nations and ethnic groups were not affected. True, no few European peoples were stripped of their independence. But what was more important for the rising bourgeoisie of some of them was that essentially they came within the borders of one country, which in many cases afforded them the chance of dominating the national market without winning national independence.

This helped to stabilise the system of international relations. The main reason for this stability, however, was the victory of the bourgeoisie in the economically advanced countries and the relative stability of the capitalist system in the 19th century. But how did this work? How did the stability of capitalism make international relations stable as well? This can be explained exclusively by the gradual dying of the ambient conflict between feudal absolutism and bourgeois parliamentarism, the reasons for which may be

¹ Christian Plume, Xavier Pasquini, *Encyclopédie des sec-
tes dans le monde*, Alain Lefèuvre, Paris, 1980, pp. 323-324.

traced, first, to the rapid growth and obvious strength of the new system and the resulting political order, and, secondly, to the fact that the bourgeois mode of production had been shaping everywhere in the womb of the feudal system.

The interventions of the absolute monarchies, indeed, were always directed solely against the revolutionary forms in which capitalism asserted itself in some countries, and certainly not against the capitalist system as such.

Lastly, we must bear in mind the increasing gravitation of the bourgeoisie towards compromise with the forces of the old system—on the international scene even more distinctly than inside the country—owing to the “red spectre” that already loomed on the horizon and frightened it out of its wits.

West German Professor Friedrich Ruge, whom I have already referred to, writes: “We can describe the Holy Alliance as the first attempt at creating collective security in contrast to collective defence, which presupposes a definite adversary.”¹

The above merely reproduces in a more sophisticated vernacular the arguments of the leaders of the Holy Alliance who sought to prove its benefits for all countries. Outside interference is pictured by Ruge as a guarantee of security and of state interests. Afraid of being taken as an apologist of the reactionary interventions of the Holy Alliance, Ruge prefers to declare them a departure from its principles. Yet this very departure was expressive of its substance. Some Western historians, it is true, go further than Ruge. The American Irby C. Nichols, for example, wrote some time ago: “Although the Pentarchy [England, France, Russia, Prussia, and Austria—Y.Ch.] became a tool of reaction, it nonetheless proved an instrument of peace; and peace was the primary need of Europe after two decades of war. The Congress System constitutes a significant chapter in the rise of interna-

¹ Friedrich Ruge, *Bündnisse in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von UNO, NATO, EWG und dem Warschauer Pakt*, Bernard & Graefe Verlag, Frankfort on the Main, 1971, p. 78.

tionalism, and the Congress of Verona, the last page of that chapter.”¹

For Nichols, as we see, counter-revolutionary interventionism legitimised by the Congress of Verona opened the door to the French intervention against the Spanish Revolution, and is equivalent to peace and internationalism!

For Metternich, one of the originators of the Holy Alliance, that alliance and the collective actions of the European powers—the so-called concert of Europe—were a means of maintaining the dynastic *status quo* established by the Vienna treaties of 1815. The concept of that *status quo* referred, among other things, to a trumped-up all-European conspiracy of Jacobins (who had renamed themselves liberals) to topple thrones and altars, and thereupon also public order, even all civilisation. The Holy Alliance and the European concert were portrayed as the instruments that would combat this “most malicious” conspiracy.

The concept of the dynastic *status quo* did not in principle renounce the possibility of peace and co-operation among states with different social and political systems. In fact, the political thinking of those times never posed that question. The complete restoration of the old social arrangements was not even contemplated, except by the most blatant and doltish ideologues of feudal authoritarian reaction. It never occurred to anyone, for example, to shut bourgeois parliamentarian England out of the European concert. The theory of the dynastic *status quo* merely renounced conciliation and peace with regimes that had sprung up by revolutionary means after the Vienna Congress.

In England, only the right wing of the ruling Tory party, with Foreign Secretary Viscount Castlereagh at its head, tended to accept the idea of the dynastic *status quo*, and this only in part. Castlereagh held that it was better to squash the petty disputes of usual times in order to act jointly in support of the

¹ Irby C. Nichols, *The European Pentarchy and the Congress of Verona, 1822*, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1971, p. 326.

existing order. But he did not want the continental powers to invigorate their positions and therefore rejected the general right to intervention, saying that the approach to every revolution should be specific and should depend on whether or not that revolution menaced the "interests of Europe". This "differentiated approach" gave English diplomacy unimpeded freedom of action.

The doctrine of the territorial *status quo* differed visibly from that of the dynastic *status quo*, though it, too, declared fidelity to the Vienna treaties of 1815. In fact, however, the devotees of that doctrine saw the European concert not as a tool for the armed suppression of revolutions in other countries, but, conversely, as an organisation that allowed for the revolutionary transformation of at least some of the countries concerned so long as this did not affect the territorial arrangements of 1815 and did not go against the prevailing balance of power in Europe.

The ideologues of the liberal and radical bourgeoisie naturally considered the Holy Alliance a league of despots directed against the rights of the people. Still, they were inclined to believe that the European concert could be a tool that, once wrested out of the hands of reaction, would change the territorial and dynastic *status quo* without outside armed interference. And in so thinking, the liberals motivated their positive attitude towards breaches of the *status quo* with references to the need for maintaining the balance of power, while the radicals appealed to the rights of nations and the interests of progress.¹

It is needless here to reproduce the debates of that time whether intervention should pursue the aim of restoring the *status quo*, as Metternich insisted, or whether it should be accompanied by a few reforms to prevent any more revolutionary explosions in future, as Tsar Alexander I deemed necessary, or whether there should be the right for collective intervention, as recommended by the Tsar, or whether each case for or against intervention should be con-

¹ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd Series, Vol. I, T. C. Hansard, London, 1831, col. 82.

sidered on its merits, as London wished, or whether there should be "individual" intervention by one of the powers on the authority of all the others, as Vienna suggested by way of a "compromise solution".

Whenever Metternich found it advisable, he argued the futility of foreign intervention. In 1820, for example, figuring that a French intervention against the Spanish revolution would work against the interests of Austria, he wrote that Spain could not be returned to normal by a foreign intervention. He went so far as to explicate the futility of interventions in general. "I believe," he declaimed, "that I can confine myself to addressing the history of all countries and all revolutions to draw the conviction that actions of foreigners have never halted or put order into the results of revolutions."¹ But Metternich wanted the revolution in Naples, which directly affected Austrian interests, suppressed at any price, with the use of "quarantine and fire". In a letter to the Austrian ambassador to London, Count Esterházy, of November 24, 1820, Metternich maintained that the revolution in Naples was a menace "to all constitutions, all rights, and all liberties".²

The legitimist principle as interpreted by Metternich implied that any measure, even the most beneficial, becomes an intolerable evil if it originates in a revolution. "The good which proceeds from a false basis ... is a very real evil for the entire society," Metternich wrote. "Thus the organization most favorable to the true well-being of the Kingdom of Naples, if it was simply the immediate and direct consequence of the criminal enterprise of the factions who have leagued themselves together for the overthrow of their country, would have to be regarded as an immense evil for Europe."³

At the Troppau Congress of the Holy Alliance, Austria submitted the draft of a pact of guarantees.

¹ *Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossii*, f. Kantseliariya, d. 241, 11: 249-250. (Archive of Russian Foreign Policy).

² *Ibid.*, d. 238, 1. 101.

³ Paul W. Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy at Its Zenith 1820-1823*, University of Texas Press, Austin, 1962, p. 76.

A memorandum dated November 28, 1820, drafted by Friedrich Gentz, suggested drawing a distinction between unlawful and lawful revolutions (the latter being defined as far-reaching constitutional modifications made by the legitimate authorities), and also between revolutions that do and do not influence neighbouring states. This was the basis on which Gentz defined his interventionist principles in the memorandum:

“1. All revolutions carried out by usurping powers or in obviously unlawful forms, and doubly so all revolutions conceived and executed by criminal means, must, for this sole fact, irrespective of their character and result, be the object of a just and legitimate intervention by foreign powers.”

To be sure, even if a revolution is executed from “above”, that is by the legitimate authorities, intervention may be wholly justified if the interests of neighbouring countries are jeopardised thereby. Furthermore, in the case of an “unlawful” revolution with a pernicious or hostile tendency (e.g., setting a “bad” example to neighbour states), “the right of intervention attains the maximum of its force”.¹ As we see, Metternich was toying with the idea of a “right” to intervention in order to prevent any reforms contrary to the wishes of the Holy Alliance.

True, the Austrian Chancellor did not venture to state this in direct form (for, if so adopted, the thesis would negate the sovereignty of European countries), and suggested it merely as an object for deliberation. In the final count, the Austrian pact of guarantees, which included these interventionist principles, was not adopted. Chiefly owing to the objections of Russia, which did not want some of its articles to be accepted.

Reactionary ideologues tried to back up legitimism and interventionism with nationalism. In 1823, French Foreign Minister Chateaubriand, when justify-

¹ Hans W. Schmalz, *Versuche einer gesamteuropäischen Organisation 1815-1820. Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Troppauer Interventionspolitik*, Verlag H. R. Sauerländer & Co., Aarau, 1940, p. 86.

ing his country's intervention declared that subversive elements from behind the Pyrenees tended to renew in France the excesses suppressed by Bonaparte's despotism, and added that the Restoration in his country was dying due to the absence of more victories after those of Napoleon.

It may still appear to some that the feudal monarchic interventionism contributed to the stability of the then existing system of international relations. At that time, the democratic forces had no alternative to offer to the foreign policy of the reactionary governments: they were either too weak, or, as in France under Napoleon, securely removed from the political arena. Besides, many liberals were prepared to accept the Bourbon Restoration imposed on France by the victorious powers, as their ideal.

In the spring of 1815, having easily dethroned the unpopular Bourbons, Napoleon returned to power for the euphoric *Cent Jours*, but was again compelled to abdicate after his defeat at Waterloo.

On March 19, 1815, a few hours before Louis XVIII fled from Paris, an article by liberal ideologue Benjamin Constant appeared in the *Débats*, his unrestrained eulogy to King Louis being accompanied by exclamations such as the following: "Bonaparte—an Attila, a Jenghiz Khan, only still more terrible and still more odious!"

A day later Napoleon arrived in Paris. And what did Constant do? Did he assassinate the tyrant? Did he flee? Or did he commit suicide?

No, he hastened to Attila's presence, and was appointed state councillor. After the fall of Napoleon, in his *Memoirs of the Cent Jours*, Constant wrote: "I am being reproached for not letting myself be killed beside the throne which I has defended on March 19. But on March 20 I raised my eyes and saw that the throne had disappeared, while France still existed."¹ Benjamin Constant did not impinge on any legitimist principles, though in his *Spirit of Conquest* he did suggest compounding them with the idea of a decen-

¹ Louis de Villefosse et Janine Bouissonnouse, *L'opposition à Napoléon*, Flammarion, Paris, 1969, pp. 330-331.

tralised Europe where each country would retain its specificity. "Variety," he wrote, "is organisation, uniformity is mechanical. Variety means life; uniformity is death."¹ This unique approach could well have conformed with the principles of the Holy Alliance.

The Holy Alliance interventionism squashed revolutions in Naples, Piedmont, and Spain in 1820-1823. But it would be a delusion to think that it thereby benefited international stability. To begin with, the interventions created tensions that prevailed for a more or less lengthy time. Furthermore, they aggravated the contradictions between the participants in the counter-revolutionary interventions. Besides, the results of the interventions were in due course overturned by the inexorable march of history.

Failure to regard the national liberation struggle in Greece as a mutiny against the "lawful monarch", the Turkish sultan, like the attempts to suppress revolutionary movements in Latin America against Spanish colonial rule, undermined the already shaken foundations of the Holy Alliance. In substance, the interventions of the Holy Alliance failed to stabilise and, on the contrary, eroded the system of inter-state relations that its chief signatories wanted to maintain, for it came into collision with the insuperable forces of economic development and social progress.

Talleyrand, who was in disfavour at that time, bitterly attacked the French intervention in Spain in 1823. He who had prodded Napoleon to start his Spanish adventure 15 years before (and who not only rejected it later, but also admitted that it was the empire's beginning of the end), was sufficiently experienced to warn against repeating past mistakes.

On October 6, 1830, when handing his letters of credence to King William IV of England as ambassador of the government formed after the overthrow of the Bourbons, Talleyrand declared that England and France both rejected interference in the internal affairs of their neighbours.

The Holy Alliance interventions were meant to prevent any revolutionary consolidation of the new sys-

¹ *The Congress of Vienna and Europe*, p. 124.

tem, and this in countries that did not at the time play any prominent role in European politics. It never occurred to anyone, however, to intervene against the hardening pillars of the bourgeois system in the West European countries. And the relatively swift elimination of the aftermaths of these interventions, which the feudal authoritarian reaction proved unable to avert, did not, of course, create the soil for renewing the ambient conflict.

Metternich, who has inspired the Holy Alliance, favoured intervention to maintain the *status quo* as recorded in the Vienna treaties of 1815 (i.e., the resolutions of the Vienna Congress), which, in effect, recognised the legitimacy of the coexistence of states with different social and political systems.

To grasp the reasons behind the counter-revolutionary interventionism of the Holy Alliance, we should remember that its most far-reaching aim was to maintain the *status quo* of 1815, and not any full restoration of feudal relations as they existed before the Great French Revolution. This, in turn, was the reason why no hopeless attempts were made to renew the ambient conflict even after the European *status quo* of 1815 was revised by a succession of national liberation movements. In the 1840s, the Vienna treaties looked hopelessly outdated. Poet Franz Grillparzer wrote then that before the Deluge there had been most surprising creatures, as evidenced by the ossified bones of mammoths and Prince Metternich's system.¹

For tens of years the break-up of Europe into bourgeois Western Europe and semi-feudal Eastern Europe failed to trigger an ambient conflict. To be sure, there is no period in modern times in which signs of ambient conflict are totally absent. This is easy to understand if we bear in mind that the passage from one system to the other occurred at different times from region to region, and also long after it was completed in the more advanced countries. But if

¹ Cited from Werner Conze, "Die Neueordnung Europas 1815—Restaurative Versteifung oder moderne Zukunftschance?", in *Wien und Europa zwischen den Revolutionen (1789-1848)*, Jugend und Volk, Vienna, 1978, p. 246.

some ambient conflicts did exercise the determining influence on the entire system of international relations, the influence of others, though substantial, was certainly not determining.

After the July 1830 revolution in France, the conflict between absolute monarchy and the parliamentary system certainly influenced the attitude of the governments of Austria, Prussia and tsarist Russia towards Louis-Philippe, King of the Barricades, as he was called, though this influence was just one of the factors that determined the alignment of forces on the international scene, and, moreover, a factor whose significance kept diminishing until it increased visibly again in 1848. During the high tide of revolution in most of Europe in 1848 and 1849, collective interventionism proved inapplicable. So were interventions in general against the revolutions in France and Germany. They were applicable and applied against the revolutions in Hungary and Italy.

Interventionism could not exercise a "stabilising" influence because very soon, as Karl Marx put it, the gravediggers of the revolution became its executors.¹ That, indeed, was the role which conservative forces played in countries where the revolution aimed at winning national independence, as well as at achieving general democratic change.

Some twenty years later, the aftermaths of the interventions against the 1848 and 1849 revolutions were eliminated: Italy was reunified, and so was Germany. Three large wars occurred in the process of this reunification, those of France (and Piedmont) against Austria, Prussia against Austria, and Prussia against France.

At the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century nationalism, as we have already seen, was closely interwoven with the ambient conflict. In the mid-19th century the link was broken. Refusing to ideologise international relations in the spirit of the ambient conflict, the ruling classes gradually

¹ Karl Marx, "The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850", in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. One, 1976, p. 193.

made nationalism the main motive of their foreign, as well as domestic, policy. With the national consciousness growing rapidly, with the national principle taking precedence in international relations, with the influence of religion waning visibly, nationalism became the only effective spiritual instrument that reaction still retained.

It was an effective instrument because it reposed on the national psychology whose elements took shape over the centuries, though, as such, it distorted them to suit its reactionary ideological principles and amounted, essentially, to ethnic prejudices. Besides, nationalism was paraded as a variety of "modern-day" national ideology true to the spirit of the times. It was a convenient tool to use against national movements of other peoples. Besides, it could also be used as a motive in wars outside the framework of the ambient conflict. Restraints against the use of nationalism existed exclusively for the ruling classes of such multinational bodies as Austria-Hungary: here reliance on the nationalism of the dominant nation was not considered a sufficiently dependable guarantee owing to the enormous numerical superiority of other nations and peoples.

Western historians note today that Bismarck's diplomacy did not ideologise foreign policy in the spirit of the Holy Alliance.¹ Bismarck said in one of his speeches of 1869 that wars could be fought exclusively for national (read nationalist—Y.Ch.) motives.²

In some of his works on foreign policy, including *A World Restored. Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace. 1812-22*, (Ebenezer Baylis and Son, London, 1957, pp. 5, 254) Henry Kissinger says lasting peace is possible if countries are not divided by ideological antagonisms. He commends Austrian Chancellor Metternich and British Foreign Secretary

¹ James Chace, "Bismarck and Kissinger", in *Encounter*, June 1974, pp. 44-47.

² Otto Bismarck, *Die Gesammelten Werke*, Otto Stollberg Verlag, Berlin, 1929, p. 50. Compare Otto Pflanze, "Nationalism in Europe 1848-1871", in *The Review of Politics*, April 1966, p. 135.

Castlereagh for adhering to this idea and for creating Europe's stable arrangements following the Napoleonic wars. Kissinger refuses to agree, however, that it was impossible to abolish ideological antagonisms since they were unavoidably generated by the very progress of history. The only possible thing, however, was to prevent these antagonisms from growing over into an ambient conflict. Yet Metternich, and partly Castlereagh, were inclined to fan the ambient conflict whenever this served their purpose, as they saw it, of maintaining the balance of power. This, indeed, was the motive force behind Metternich's interventionist policy, behind the zigzags of that policy, and behind similar twists and turns by Castlereagh.

Some Western historians admit that the United States has today in part assumed the role which Metternich's Holy Alliance had played in the 19th century.¹ Bourgeois scholars well remember what theorist Morton A. Kaplan has aptly put in the following terms: "Historians may argue over whether Metternich delayed the collapse of the old order, but the one thing that is clear beyond doubt is that the old order collapsed."²

By 1871, the number of European states had shrunk visibly: more than thirty German states had vanished, and a few Italian as well—the former incorporated in the German Empire and the latter in the Kingdom of Italy. But the system of states underwent considerably fewer changes, because it was determined by the relations prevailing between the leading powers. The German Empire, as it were, took the place of Prussia, only a much stronger one, while Italy took the place of Piedmont, also a much stronger one. At the same time, the solution of the German and Italian questions halted the operation of factors that had earlier undermined the existing European system. Typically, a destabilising effect on that system was exercised in

¹ Golo Mann in association with Alfred Heuss and August Nitschke, *Propyläen der Weltgeschichte*, Vol. 11, 2nd half-volume, Frankfort on the Main, 1976, p. 532.

² Morton A. Kaplan, *The Life and Death of the Cold War: Selected Studies in Postwar Statecraft*, Nelson Hall, Chicago, 1976, p. 279.

the next decade by quite another result of the Franco-Prussian war—the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine by Bismarck Germany.

When people speak of the “stability” and “endurance” of the system of international relations established by the Vienna Congress, they refer to those elements which survived for an entire century up to 1914, to those of its resolutions that had less of a bearing on things within the sphere of the ambient conflict which were upheld in that conflict by the conservative camp. This did not prevent the emergence of an independent Belgium or the reunification of Germany and of Italy, and we certainly do not owe it to the conservative camp that, for specific historical reasons, matters did not grow over into a European war that would have torn down the pillars of the European arrangement created in 1815. Its relative endurance may be traced directly to the fact that the behaviour of the concert of European nations and their mutual relations did not, for objective reasons, follow the lines of the ambient conflict.

The relative stability of the system of international relations in the hundred years between the Vienna Congress and the outbreak of World War I, was attained to the extent to which the powers did not consider internal processes in separate countries or even national liberation movements that abolished one or another resolution of 1815 as undermining the system as a whole. In other words, the relative stability of the period between 1815 and 1914 was due to an appreciation of the fact that it would be futile to try and keep the system “absolutely” unchanged, because its elements came into conflict with the objective laws governing the life of society.

It follows that the “secret” of the relative stability of the system of international relations in the hundred years after the Vienna Congress—a system that included states of different types in terms of social classes—may be traced to the gradual cessation of the ambient conflict, to the fact that it was possible to partly modify that system and adapt it to the processes of internal change in various countries. The absence of ambient conflict in the inter-state relations

of that period doubtlessly contributed to the success of the struggle for the emergence of nation-states in Europe and the extirpation of slavery in the United States—developments that were important landmarks in the history of social progress. It follows that the experience of history upsets the claim that the stability created by the resolutions of the Vienna Congress is impossible in the 20th century owing to the distinctions in social systems from country to country.

The First Thirty Years

In 1917, the socialist revolution triumphed in Russia, ushering in a new era of transition from capitalism to socialism in the history of humanity. The Great October Socialist Revolution put an end to the exploiting system. Power was taken over by the working class in alliance with the working peasantry. The revolution created a new type of state, the Soviet Socialist Republic, the highest type of democracy, a democracy for the working people. The world-historical significance of the October Revolution is that it brought into the world forms and methods of changing society, economy and culture in order to attain that great goal of the working class—socialism and communism. The October Revolution shook up the old world of the exploitation of man by man, of oppression and plunder of colonies and dependencies enslaved by imperialism.

Imperialism responded by trying to suppress the revolution by means of an armed invasion. Lenin wrote at that time: "Reciprocal relations between peoples and the world political system as a whole are determined by the struggle waged by a small group of imperialist nations against the Soviet movement and the Soviet states headed by Soviet Russia."¹

World War I was still on during the first year of the Soviet Republic. US President Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points published early in 1918 were, in effect, a cam-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, 1977, p. 241.

ouflaged renunciation of the principle of the coexistence of states with different social systems. Exploiting propagandist rhetoric about the Western "democracies" being locked in struggle with German "militarism", Wilson tried to channel the fight against the young Soviet state. The counter-revolutionary intervention of the Entente countries (first of all the USA, Britain, France, Japan, and others) was portrayed by bourgeois politicians as a fresh installment of the struggle of "democracy" versus "dictatorship". From the outset, imperialists all over the world went out of their way to distort the class implications of their struggle against the world's first state of the working people, identifying capitalism with an abstract "freedom" and the rule of the proletariat with "suppression of freedom", "despotism", etc.

During the first year of Soviet Russia, an intervention was launched against it by the two blocs of warring imperialist powers. Typically, the German bloc continued its intervention even after concluding the Brest Peace with Soviet Russia in the spring of 1918. As for the Entente countries, they masked their intervention with specious claims (abandoned at the end of 1918) that the armed invasion of Soviet Russia pursued the sole aim of combating Germany. This ideological cover was used by the imperialists for the purpose, first, of pacifying public opinion in their own countries and preventing their own working class from coming out in defence of the Soviet Republic; second, to deceive people in Russia about their true intentions and to portray their ally, the Russian counter-revolution, as a "national force", and, third, to conceal from their own allies (who were simultaneously imperialist rivals) their plans, which, along with overthrowing Soviet power, included the territorial annexation, even partition, of Russia.

It is indicative, too, that while pursuing their intervention against the world's first proletarian revolution, the imperialists were compelled in their propaganda to obscure, if not totally conceal, their main aim of capitalist restoration.

The US Government, for example, announced on July 5, 1918, that the purpose of its intervention in

Siberia was to render protection to the Czechoslovaks against the Germans and to assist "in the efforts at self-government or self-defence in which the Russians themselves may be ready to accept assistance".

As Winston Churchill added sarcastically in his memoirs, the US also proposed "to send a detachment of the Young Men's Christian Association to offer moral guidance to the Russian people".¹

The generation that carried out the world's first victorious socialist revolution, which safeguarded it in grim battles against domestic and foreign reaction, was convinced that in the near future liberated labour would triumph undividedly on Earth, and that universal peace among nations that had thrown off the chains of oppression and exploitation would take root. History, however, followed a different, zigzag, path. The young Soviet Republic remained alone in a capitalist encirclement for many years, and was compelled to either fight off counter-revolutionary intervention or to continuously reckon with the threat that the imperialist invasion would be renewed.

It took Lenin's genius to find the only correct solution to the problem of relations between the Soviet Republic and the capitalist countries in the new historical setting. Already in the first few months after the October Revolution, Lenin and the Communist Party came to grips with devotees of the adventurist and anti-Marxist theory of "revolutionary war" to "push revolution" in other countries, which, objectively, would involve the young worker-peasant state in an unequal struggle with the strongly armed German imperialism. Lenin showed that the fundamental aim of the Soviet Republic's foreign policy was to establish relations of peaceful coexistence with countries that had a different social system. Lenin's approach to this crucial problem, an outstanding achievement of Marxist thought, is perceived by all humanity as a necessary fundamental principle of

¹ Winston S. Churchill, *The Aftermath*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1929, p. 88.

international relations on which the future of the world now depends.

The Soviet Republic tried, the moment it was formed, to establish normal relations with foreign states. Already after an undisguised armed intervention was launched against it, the Soviet Government repeatedly addressed peace proposals to the US representative Dewitt Clinton Poole (on August 5, 1918), US President Wilson (October 24, 1918), and to all the Entente governments (November 3, November 7, and December 23, 1918, January 12 and 17, February 4, March 12, and May 7, 1919).¹ The Entente countries ignored these proposals. True, to mislead public opinion, they suggested calling a conference on Prince Island, to which representatives of various White Guard powers would be invited along with Soviet delegates. Here the imperialists expected the Soviet Government to refuse to come, so as to thereupon portray it as an enemy of peace. But Soviet Russia unmasked the sham peacemakers. It agreed to negotiate and said it was ready to make concessions. Thereupon, the Entente governments hastily buried the Prince Island project.

Soviet Russia did not stop working for peace. The People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs pointed out on July 17, 1920 that the foreign policy of the Soviet Republic was and remained the same: peaceful coexistence with other governments, whatever they were. "The facts have led us and other countries," he said, "to realise the necessity of lasting relations between the worker-peasant government and capitalist governments."

In the meantime, the intervention continued, even gaining in scale. One thing, however, is well known: despite their enormous economic and military superiority, and despite the considerable strength of the domestic counter-revolution which they used to the full, the interventionist imperialist countries failed dismally in their attempt to destroy the world's first worker-peasant state. The alliance of the working

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Eighth All-Russia Conference of the R.C.P.(B.), *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, 1977, p. 191.

class and the peasants of Russia proved to be unconquerable. The victory of the Soviet people over the interventionists and White Guards showed what inexhaustible forces the socialist revolution had generated and how unconquerable the new, more advanced social system was. Of great help was the support of working people all over the world, who organised the massive Hands Off Soviet Russia movement.

The intervention had barely ended when the reactionary press began scaring people with a "Bolshevik threat from the East", and even tried to portray the anti-Soviet policy of the imperialist powers as "defence" against what it called Soviet expansionism. More, the rightist press did not shrink from vile lies and ascribed to Lenin a statement that the ending of the intervention and civil war was opening up vistas of a second period of offensive wars.¹ In fact, however, in the spring of 1921, when the period of anti-Soviet intervention ended, Lenin stressed: "We are now exercising our main influence on the international revolution through our economic policy... The struggle in this field has now become global."²

Time and again, in the preceding chapters, I have spoken of the relativity of historical parallels. Still, I would like to cite one of them. The development of society, Lenin used to say, often occurs as a spiral, as it were. And despite the incommensurable difference between the situation of the Soviet Union and of the socialist camp as a whole in our day and the international situation in the early years of the Soviet Republic, there are also elements of resemblance. The international situation in 1921-1923 had elements which later became characteristic of the cold war, and other elements that were tokens of international detente.

In 1922, speaking at the Genoa Conference, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Georgy Chicherin, acting on Lenin's directions, declared that while the Russian delegation adhered to the principles of com-

¹ E. g., see *Journal de Débats*, December 7, 1922.

² V. I. Lenin, "Tenth All-Russia Conference of the R.C.P.(B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, 1977, p. 437.

munism, it acknowledged that in the current historical era the parallel existence of the old and the burgeoning new social system was entirely possible, and economic cooperation between states representing the two systems of property imperatively necessary for universal economic rehabilitation.

The moves that Lenin and the Bolshevik Party made on the international scene in those, by now remote, days are closely related to the Soviet foreign policy of our time, worked out and carried into effect by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. They are linked by indissoluble ties of continuity in the ideological field and in practice. In this profound, historical sense, the great Lenin had stood at the sources of the policy of detente. Lenin's principles lie at the root of current CPSU foreign policy, aimed at consolidating international security and the principle of the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems.

In the period between the world wars, and later too, Soviet foreign policy availed itself of the realistic chances of preventing a united front of capitalist countries from shaping against the then one and only proletarian state. These chances survived during the direct military clash of social systems during World War II. The march of events bore out the Marxist analysis of laws governing the system of international relations on which Soviet diplomacy based its mode of operations. The acute imperialist contradictions that divided the USA and Britain, on the one hand, and the countries of the fascist bloc, on the other, led to an armed conflict between them. The emergence of the Anglo-Soviet-American anti-fascist coalition was an outstanding achievement of Soviet foreign policy and worked objectively in the vital interests of all freedom-loving peoples. One of the main lessons of World War II was that despite the distinctions in social, economic and political systems, the countries of the anti-fascist coalition proved capable of joining forces at a difficult hour for all humankind to repulse the common enemy, an enemy aspiring to world supremacy, and to fight that enemy hand in hand in the name of lasting peace.

There is no sensible alternative to the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems in our time. The only existing alternative is nuclear insanity, the self-destruction of life on Earth. Imperialist politicians and ideologues, however, blinded by class hatred, are refusing to accept this incontrovertible fact.

The decisions of the Yalta and Potsdam conferences of the Big Three—the anti-fascist coalition of the USSR, the USA, and Great Britain—defined the basics of the postwar arrangements in line with their recognition and acceptance of the principle of peaceful coexistence. It is small wonder, therefore, that these decisions were, and still are, bitterly attacked by spokesmen of extreme reactionary imperialist quarters. Zbigniew Brzezinski, once aide to US President Jimmy Carter, said on television on January 5, 1982, that Americans would do well to consider a public renunciation of the Yalta agreements, and stated more specifically on March 8 of that year that the USA must turn its back on Yalta. In August 1984, President Reagan, too, called for a new look at the Yalta decisions, and in February 1985, on their fortieth anniversary, declared that the dividing line between West and East (in other words, the existence of socialist as well as capitalist countries) cannot be legalised.

In August 1945, we may recall, President Harry Truman ordered US atomic bombs to be dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, though there was no military need for it. Hundreds of thousands of peaceful civilians were sacrificed in order that US imperialism could show its muscle and thereby back up its claim to what it called world leadership, to carrying forward a policy of atomic blackmail against the Soviet Union.

Surveying the relations between social systems in our century, reactionary ideologues maintain that the United States has made three cardinal mistakes: the first when it did not wipe out Soviet power at the time of the foreign intervention and the civil war; the second, when it did not assist Nazi Germany in its war against the Soviet Union, and the third, when it

did not resort to atomic arms against the USSR when it had sole possession of these arms in order to make Moscow bow to Western demands.

On May 19, 1945, Joseph Grew, Under-Secretary of State, said that if anything definite existed, it was the future war between the USSR and the USA. The Joint War Plans Committee, in directive 432/D of December 14, 1945, envisaged a decisive strike against the USSR with 196 atomic bombs. And on March 5, 1946, a war, so far a cold war, was declared on the Soviet Union by Winston Churchill in his Fulton speech. On April 4, 1949, the North Atlantic bloc, a military alliance directed against the USSR, the other socialist countries, and the national liberation movement, was concluded in Washington. Under Plan Dropshot, worked out at that time, atomic war against the USSR was to break out on January 1, 1957, with some 200 atomic and some 250,000 tons of high-explosive bombs being showered on Soviet cities, and the territory of the Soviet Union being thereupon occupied by 23 US divisions.¹ Instructions were issued, too, to begin developing a new, thermonuclear, "absolute" weapon.

But the designs of forcing the Soviet Union to its knees were built on sand. "At no time after 1950," as US historians, too, admit these days, "was the United States capable of destroying Russia or her allies without taking on totally unacceptable risks herself."²

One of the main dangers that stalks a politician every step of the way is to fall prey to his own propaganda. For reactionary politicians heading the conservative camp in a conflict this usually meant losing touch with reality, and living in a world thoroughly distorted by their own propaganda. This topsy-turvy notion flowed directly from the aims of the conservative camp—aims historically unattainable and com-

¹ *Dropshot, The United States Plan for War with the Soviet Union in 1957*, ed. by Anthony Cave Brown, Dial Press/James Wade, New York, 1978, pp. 1, 6, 169.

² Stephen E. Ambrose, *Rise to Globalism. American Foreign Policy, 1938-1980*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1981, p. 20.

pletely contrary to the vital interests of the peoples involved in the conflict, so completely contrary, in fact, that they had to be carefully concealed and even ascribed to the other side.

On the fourth of July 1976, a national holiday, the United States celebrated the country's bicentennial. Neither the White House nor the Capitol were chosen as the venue of the official ceremony. President Gerald Ford spent the day on one of the biggest US aircraft carriers with a truly symbolic name, *Forrestal*.

Approximately a quarter of a century before that celebration, in March 1949, a man of medium height, no longer young, was rushing up and down a Washington street, screaming: "The Russians are coming! They're here!" He was hospitalised, and a few days later found dead beneath the 16th-storey window of his ward: one end of the belt of his hospital gown had been tied to the radiator, the other round his neck. But the belt had held up his fall for only an instant. The man was James Forrestal, US Secretary of Defense, who was earlier portrayed as the embodiment of the US resolve and intent to "contain" and "bridle" communism, to make the 20th century an American Age. The big-time press glorified Forrestal then. Forrestal, however, as the *Washington Post* would later write, was "haunted by an obsession that the Cold War was the prelude to a shooting war". This obsession, the paper added, became an *idée fixe* as time went on.¹

Many in Washington had known that Forrestal was of unsound mind. They had known it long before he was carted off to hospital. How long was an insane man allowed to run the Pentagon, what orders he issued, how and when did he lose his mind, and why subordinates saw no difference between those orders and his previous ones—these questions have not been answered. Though signs of insanity had appeared in the latter half of 1948, neither President Truman nor

¹ Jack Anderson with James Boyd, *Confessions of a Muckraker*, Ballantine Books, New York, 1980, pp. 146-147, 157-158.

any of his aides had any doubts about the insane Defense Secretary's proposal to plan a "preventive" atomic war against the USSR. It was approved without delay and formalised as an NSC directive.

No more than a year had passed after Forrestal's suicide, when a new strange occurrence rocked Washington. Forrestal's successor, Defense Secretary Louis A. Johnson, interrupted a State Department meeting devoted to the same old problem of preparing a nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union, jumped to his feet, shouted at his amazed colleagues, and, refusing to listen to any objections, rushed out followed by high-ranking generals of his retinue. It took some time for Truman to dismiss Johnson, who, thereafter, underwent a brain operation. To be sure, political lunacy is not always accompanied by physical insanity, but even partial coincidences are overpoweringly eloquent.

The installation of a Republican administration in Washington in 1953 led to no cardinal change. As one US historian put it, "Eisenhower and Dulles used the image of falling dominoes to illustrate their belief that the crisis in Indochina could eventually endanger British and American economic and strategic positions in the western Pacific."¹ In the domino theory, countries are conceived as a row of dominoes which fall one after another once the first one is knocked over.

The domino theory was one of the main justifications for the US counter-revolutionary intervention in Asia and Latin America in the 1950s and, indeed, during the US war in Vietnam. "The United States of the Cold War period, like ancient Rome, was concerned with all political problems in the world," writes US historian Ambrose. "The loss of even one country to Communism, therefore, while not in itself a threat to American physical security, carried implications that officials in Washington found highly disturbing. They became greatly concerned with the appearance as well as the reality of events, and there

¹ Elmo Richardson, *The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, Regents Press of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 1979, p. 76.

was much talk of dominoes."¹

Yet, we could list many recurrences that aggravated the cold war in US policy before and after dominoes entered the vocabulary. Symptoms of a certain improvement of the international climate appeared in 1954 and 1955. But already in the autumn of 1956 the United States renewed its malicious anti-Soviet campaign, which included plans of armed aid to the counter-revolutionary mutiny in Hungary. The US plan of intervention, however, proved unmanageable. "Unless the major nations of Europe would, without delay, ally themselves spontaneously with us (an unimaginable prospect)," Eisenhower wrote later, "we could do nothing."²

In the following year, 1957, a crushing blow was dealt to the plans of an American Age. Ezra Taft Benson, a member of Eisenhower's Cabinet, wrote: "This was the year of Sputniks I and II... We took a new look at our science, our schools, our defenses, our alliances."³ At the turn of the 1950s into the 60s the tension in US-Soviet relations diminished a little, and at once there came the provocative US U-2 spy plane flight over Soviet territory, obviously incompatible with Washington's assurances of wanting to normalise relations with the Soviet Union. And the first steps of John Kennedy's administration in recognising the new realities associated with the growing economic and defence potential of the socialist community were accompanied by an aggravation of the criminal and bloody US war against Vietnam.

The succession of counter-revolutionary interventions and plots in the history of the imperialist powers during the cold war in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America, was truly endless. According to a report drawn up on the initiative of a coalition of US organisations favouring arms control, no fewer than ten million people died in so-called local wars start-

¹ Stephen E. Ambrose, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

² Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years. Waging Peace. 1956-1961*, Doubleday & Company, New York, 1965, p. 89.

³ Ezra Taft Benson, *Cross Fire. The Eight Years with Eisenhower*, Doubleday & Co., New York, 1962, p. 343.

ed by imperialism after World War II. Time and again, the US policy of "brinkmanship", "liberation", "rolling back communism", and "massive retaliation" brought the world to the edge of the nuclear abyss.

Was the cold war unavoidable? In the latter half of the 1940s and in the 50s the answer of bourgeois politicians and theorists was usually a firm "yes", whereupon they referred to the imaginary "Soviet threat", "communist aggression", and the like. At the end of the 1950s, however, the cold war policy and ideology ran into a crisis. The radical change in the balance of power on the international scene in socialism's favour brought home to a segment of the ruling element in the United States that it was futile to cling to the bankrupt cold war policy. A search began for ways of "softening up" the socialist countries from within. Bellicose Western groups counted on fanning nationalist sentiment. The nationalism of feudal times had been a tool against bourgeois democracy. Bourgeois nationalism, extensively used at home against the working class and as an ideological justification of unjust, predatory wars, became a tool of imperialist reaction against socialism in the world arena.

The systematic ideological indoctrination of the people in the spirit of reactionary nationalism had helped drive the masses to slaughter in imperialist World War I that took a toll of 10 million lives and 20 million crippled, and destroyed enormous amounts of property created by the labour of several generations. And the man-hating, racist ideology of Nazism, the nationalist Munich policy of appeasing the aggressor, helped launch World War II, which claimed 50 million lives, including those of 20 million Soviet citizens. These two reminders should be enough to show what monstrous sacrifices the Moloch of reactionary nationalism claimed in the 20th century.

The struggle of capitalism and socialism, the confrontation of the current era, prompts the imperialist bourgeoisie to fall back on nationalism when ideologically "justifying" the conflict it began in the sphere of inter-state relations, buttressing its own rear and

trying to erode the unity of the progressive, socialist camp. With the military and technical superiority of the capitalist camp gradually vanishing, reaction is counting more and more on nationalism to take the world back to the worst cold war times.

As the world turned into the 1970s, it became obvious that the main concepts of US foreign policy were not viable: the cold war had failed to contain the growth of the power of the Soviet Union, of its prestige and influence. The United States had proved an incompetent international policeman protecting a world order that favoured imperialism. Armed force as the chief tool of foreign policy was becoming less and less effective, and attempts at backing the positions from strength policy with so-called dollar diplomacy also proved ineffective. The financial burden of conducting an aggressive foreign policy on a global scale strained the US economy.

So, in the 1970s, a trend towards detente surfaced in international relations. Positive moves were achieved in Soviet-American relations. In May 1972, during the US President's visit to Moscow, the two countries signed the Basic Principles of Mutual Relations, the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, the Interim Agreement on Certain Measures with Respect to the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, and a number of cooperation agreements concerning economy and trade, science and technology, medicine and health, environmental protection, etc. On June 23, 1973, the Soviet Union and the USA concluded an agreement on the prevention of nuclear war and an agreement on the basic principles of negotiations on the further limitation of strategic offensive arms. The Soviet-American summit in Vladivostok, too, was highly significant. And in June 1979, the Soviet-American summit in Vienna culminated in the signing of the Strategic Offensive Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT-2), whose implementation would have paved the way for new effective accords leading to the cessation of the nuclear arms race and to a tangible reduction of nuclear arms.

Considerable positive progress was made in the relations of the Soviet Union and other countries of the

socialist community with the Federal Republic of Germany, Britain, France, Italy, and Japan.

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe which gathered in Helsinki in 1975 on the initiative of the socialist countries, culminating in the signing of the Final Act on August 1, 1975, was an indisputable success of the peace forces, of the policy of peaceful coexistence.

In the Helsinki Final Act, the participating 33 European countries, the United States and Canada, pledged to cooperate in consolidating peace and security in Europe, to contribute to the rapprochement and cooperation of the European countries, and to broaden, deepen and make continuing and lasting the process of detente. Its signatories motivated their efforts by being "mindful of their common history and recognizing that the existence of elements common to their traditions and values can assist them in developing their relations, and desiring to search, fully taking into account the individuality and diversity of their positions and views, for possibilities of joining their efforts", and added that they were motivated by the wish of "overcoming distrust and increasing confidence, solving the problems that separate them and cooperating in the interest of mankind."

The Helsinki accords recorded the principles of sovereign equality, respect for the rights inherent in sovereignty, refraining from the threat or use of force, inviolability of frontiers, territorial integrity of states, and peaceful settlement of disputes. "The participating States," the Final Act further said, "will refrain from any intervention, direct or indirect, individual or collective, in the internal or external affairs falling within the domestic jurisdiction of another participating State, regardless of their mutual relations."

They would accordingly refrain from any form of armed intervention or threat of such intervention against another participating State.

It is specially recorded in the Final Act that the participating States would also "refrain from direct or indirect assistance to terrorist activities, or to subver-

sive or other activities directed towards the violent overthrow of the regime of another participating State.”¹

The document acknowledged the equal rights of all peoples and their right to self-determination.

Influential imperialist quarters, however, who were compelled to agree to detente, tried to give it a different content of their own. They interpreted detente as a kind of international sanction and guarantee of the social and political *status quo*. In place of previous militarist cold war doctrines, they, therefore, hauled out the doctrine of deterrence, a kind of detente from positions of strength. Under that doctrine, imperialism’s military power became a means of constant pressure on the Soviet Union, prompting it to accept the American, imperialist interpretation of detente, and saw to it that reactionary, pro-imperialist governments would retain power wherever they existed in Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa.

As Tad Szulc, a US journalist, pointed out, “despite Nixon’s pious words about American leadership for peace in the world, his administration’s policies were characterized by extraordinary immorality. Such dictatorships as the Greek junta, Caetano’s regime in Portugal, the moribund Franco regime in Spain, Park’s government in South Korea, the Brazilian military government, and the shah’s repressive government in Iran were among Nixon’s and Kissinger’s favorites... Subversion of governments not to Nixon’s and Kissinger’s liking—even if they were democratically elected—was an accepted policy.”²

The march of events proved that imperialism’s designs are illusory. The last European fascist regimes in Greece, Portugal and Spain, collapsed. The people of Vietnam reunified their country. United Vietnam is successfully building socialism. The democratic forces have won in Laos and Kampuchea. Anti-imperialist regimes have triumphed in Angola, Ethiopia, Nicaragua and Afghanistan. The shah’s regime in Iran

¹ *Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. Final Act, Helsinki, 1975*, pp. 77, 80.

² Tad Szulc, *The Illusion of Peace. Foreign Policy in the Nixon Years*, The Viking Press, New York, 1978, p. 804.

has been overthrown. Attempts at hindering the liberation of the people of Zimbabwe from colonial oppression are clearly doomed to fail.

In defiance of the objective needs, of the vital interests of all nations and countries, the ruling quarters in the United States began in mid-1978 to wreck detente, to step up the nuclear arms race in a bid to win military superiority over the Soviet Union, and to export counter-revolution to developing and non-aligned countries.

In March 1980, Zbigniew Brzezinski "discovered" that the cold war had never ended. And Richard Nixon wrote a book to the effect that a third world war had started after 1945 and was still going on.

The so-called human rights campaign was also part of the US aggressive policy. Here is how Brzezinski defined its aims: fear of communism can no longer cement foreign policy, while the topic that can is human rights.

Elliott Abrams, Assistant Secretary of State, declared in 1983 that the principal element of any human rights policy is the contention with communism, and that it should not hinder the United States from maintaining good relations with repressive regimes. All these things were to serve counter-revolutionary interventionism or, as Abrams put it, to prevent communist governments with Moscow ties from coming to power in any country.

In the 1960s and the early half of the 70s the principal weapon in psychological warfare against the socialist countries was the theory of convergence and deideologisation, whereas the right wing of the US bourgeoisie that had come to power in the 1980s embarked on organising a "crusade" against socialism. This was announced by President Reagan for all the world to hear when addressing British Parliament on June 6, 1982. A little earlier, in May 1981, in his first major foreign policy speech, he explained that the USA should not rely on treaties but on force of arms.

A directive drawn up on President Reagan's orders concerning armaments in the 1984/85 fiscal year says that the main purpose of the USA is to destroy socialism as a social system. The plan of a so-called pro-

tracted nuclear war drawn up on White House instructions set the aim of destroying Soviet power, whereupon the Western scale of values would reign supreme.

Veritably, a policy of madmen! There can be no winners in a nuclear war. A report drawn up in the autumn of 1982 by a number of US organisations favouring arms control says world stockpiles of nuclear armaments are equivalent to 16 billion tons of TNT, meaning that there is 3.5 tons of TNT for every living person on Earth!

One of the chief motivations for the US return to a confrontation policy is its dream of hegemony. Suffice it to recall that Washington used the international tensions it had itself stoked up to try and buttress its position of leader in the capitalist world. According to President Reagan, the USA has an amazing capacity for great and selfless deeds, and therefore has the Lord's mandate to care for long-suffering mankind.

But let's look at the facts. In the 19th century alone, the US army and navy took part in 8,600 armed invasions and other military operations in alien territory. A Brookings Institution report says that from 1946 to 1975, the USA had on at least 215 occasions used force in international relations either in the form of direct military interventions, shows of force, or threats to use nuclear weapons.

And according to *U.S. News and World Report* estimates, Washington resorted to force 262 times since World War II to achieve its aims on the world scene. In the time from 1975 to 1983 alone, the USA dispatched troops to intervene outside the borders of the country on 44 occasions. Reagan announced that "the defense of the Caribbean and Central America against Marxist-Leninist takeover is vital to our national security".¹

In July 1983 he said the USA would employ all means, including armed force, to prevent the countries in Central America from becoming what he called Marxist dictatorships. In August 1982, US Senate adopted the Simms amendment saying that the USA

¹ *U.S. News and World Report*, March 21, 1983, p. 24.

was resolved to use any suitable means, including force of arms, to contain what it described as Cuban aggression in the Western hemisphere. State Secretary George Shultz declared the US government's support of this amendment. Yet even Republican Charles Percy, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, compared the Simms amendment with the notorious Tonkin Resolution, which had been used to justify the US intervention in Vietnam.

In 1983, the Non-Aligned Summit in Delhi stressed that the processes occurring in Central America were generated by internal social and economic causes and had nothing to do with the ideological confrontation between East and West. What we have to remember, however, is that in the past the United States resorted to force on 14 occasions against Mexico, 14 against Cuba, 11 against Panama, 10 against Nicaragua, 9 against the Dominican Republic, 7 against Colombia, 7 against Honduras, 5 against Haiti, 3 against Puerto Rico, and 2 against Guatemala.

The anti-detente policy of the United States, its policy of drift towards nuclear confrontation, is encountering ever increasing resistance of all nations of the world, including the people of the United States.

The return to the more aggressive forms of the positions from strength policy imposed on the United States by the military-industrial complex has no chance of success. It failed ignominiously in the past, when the world balance of power was incomparably more favourable to imperialism, and will fail now, spelling bankruptcy for its devotees. It should be remembered that even in the USA, spokesmen of the most bellicose imperialist groups do not always venture to publicly mention their plans of "destroying communism". Usually, they pass off their programme of aggression and piracy as "defence" against the non-existent Soviet threat. No few influential Western politicians pay lip service to the principles of peaceful coexistence while seeking to emasculate them of their true content and use them as a screen in a bid to invigorate the positions of imperialist states or secure uncompensated concessions from the socialist countries.

This is true, for example, of the US administration's bid in the early 1980s to impose terms on the Soviet Union in the negotiations on intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe, that would handcuff the USSR while the USA would be free to carry out its high-powered military programmes. Furthermore, it was patently clear that the USA used the negotiations as a screen for the deployment in Europe of US nuclear first-strike weaponry. At the root of this approach lay a refusal to negotiate on a basis of equality and equal security.

This policy "from strength" and the hopeless attempts to win military superiority over the socialist countries by extending the arms race to outer space is countervailed by the Soviet policy aiming at normal and good relations with the USA and the NATO countries, at halting rather than intensifying the arms race, a policy that seeks no unilateral advantages and does not try to impose anything on the other side. The Soviet goal is to secure the final destruction of all nuclear arms and thereby the final elimination of the threat of nuclear war.

The idea of peaceful coexistence which the Soviet Union urges the Western countries to follow, presupposes non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other countries. This principle, recorded in scores of international treaties and in modern-day international law, is again being placed in question and ignored by the US administration. The range of US interventions is fairly wide. Take the intervention against tiny Grenada, the undeclared wars against the people of Nicaragua and of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, and US support of subversive elements in many countries of Latin America, Asia, and Africa.

Through the Secretary of State, the US government even declared in February 1985 that Washington had the "moral right" to interfere in the internal affairs of the countries of the socialist community. Yet any such attempt is doomed to failure. The socialist countries are prepared to repulse any and all imperialist impingements on their social and political system or on their great achievements in building the new society. Safeguarding their national sovereignty

against any venture of the more aggressive groups of present-day imperialism, the countries of the socialist community are thereby helping to curb the forces of world reaction, to assert the principles of peaceful coexistence, to frustrate plans hostile to international security and the vital interests of all peoples of the world.

Struggle of the Worlds

My survey of the history of the struggle between social systems in international relations is coming to an end. The examination of ambient conflicts has given us enough material to judge whether or not Western politologists and historians are right in saying that ambient conflicts are resolvable only by resort to arms, that detente is possible only if the progressive camp renounces the basics of its ideology and even "guarantees" that the prevailing social arrangements shall be preserved in countries of the conservative camp, that conflicts are a kind of remedy against international anarchy, and so on. Yet the lessons we learn from history do not simply refute the above. They contain judgements with a direct bearing on the key problems of the present-day world.

The basic class antagonism of a given epoch may or may not be reflected in inter-state relations. Take the period of industrial capitalism, when the antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat did not find immediate expression in the field of foreign relations, and take the current times, when it does. In terms of the world as a whole, the basic class antagonism is reflected in international relations during the transitional epochs.

Ambient conflicts can be divided into two main categories: ambient conflicts between social, economic and political systems, that is, conflicts that arise during the transition from one system to another, and ambient conflicts within one and the same system which may, in turn, be classed as being or not being part of progressive developments within a given social system.

Ambient conflicts within a social system may be conflicts between the exploiting and the exploited classes, between the same ruling classes of different countries, and between different ruling classes. Different countries may represent different sides in an ambient conflict. But this does not rule out cases when both sides may be represented within each separate country, even if one of these sides is insignificant in terms of influence. The "side" that predominates within a given state, operates in its name on the international scene.

In ambient conflicts, one of the sides always seeks to exploit any internal strife in the hostile country, to back up its friends there—and this either in defence against the common enemy or for aggressive purposes. At the same time, one of the sides (usually the weaker side) inside the country often tries to take the upper hand with the aid of its external friends. These factors tend to impart to any ambient conflict generated locally by the needs of world development, an international character, and to cause substantial change in the system of international relations.

The tendency towards a forcible resolution of ambient conflicts in the field of inter-state relations, though it expressed the interests of the old ruling classes to a definite extent (but never those of the new ruling classes, which have no need to resort to force), never failed to run foul of the objective laws that govern the ascendant advance of society. That was exactly why the forces that seek to overcome that tendency were invariably backed by the objective laws of the process of history.

Each passage from one social system to another could assume the form of an ambient conflict (in the sense in which the term is used in this book) because it occurred in more than one country and at different times. But one such passage could also trigger several ambient conflicts. Because the collision between the old and the new systems was at first embodied in less developed forms, and later in more developed ones that adequately reflected the substance of that collision. (The conflict between the old feudal and the new bourgeois systems took the form of a clash

between Protestantism and the Catholic Counter-Reformation in the 16th and the 17th century, and the form of a clash between absolute monarchy and the constitutional parliamentary regime at the end of the 18th and in the 19th century.)

Yet the political contention that produced less mature ideological forms (especially in a religious wrapping) and institutions acquired relative independence in relation to the social background, and often survived when the more consummate forms of the same class antagonism had taken shape. It follows that more than one ambient conflict can exist simultaneously even within one and the same region. Prior to the 19th century, ambient conflicts generated by the transition from one social system to another, were mostly of an intra-regional nature. While conflicts unrelated to any such transition and usually representing a clash of world religions in ideological terms, were mostly inter-regional.

We use the term "camp" in an ambient conflict as an objectively existing group of powers brought together by a common ideology. It may or may not be formalised in treaties of alliance, and it was something more permanent than coalitions embracing part or all of the countries of the camp in question. More precisely, a camp finds embodiment in a definite coalition at some definite period. Obviously, the camp may at different stages of the conflict consist of different states.

The scientific assessment of the place of an ambient conflict in history should be based on its relation to the tasks that faced the progressive class at one or another period in history (e.g., the task of abolishing the feudal system that faced the bourgeoisie in the 17th to 19th centuries). It may from the outset be outside the sphere of these tasks (such as the contention between the Ottoman Empire and the West European countries in the 16th and 17th centuries). It may (but not necessarily) be the payment for an attempt at tackling these tasks, but becomes historically less and less justified as it develops. The capitalist system matured within the

feudal most nonuniformly in different countries. It was historically nonavoidable, therefore, that for a long time feudal states existed at one and the same time as states in which the development of the capitalist system had brought about radical changes in the economy, in social relations and the ideology, though fairly often this was only indirectly reflected in the political system.

Equally inevitable in terms of history was the long simultaneous existence of feudal and bourgeois (capitalist) countries. In conflicts between social systems the embattled classes were the embodiment of progress, on the one hand, and of reaction, on the other. Naturally, the life of the contending camps headed by these classes abounded in diverse tendencies and was subject to diverse objective laws of social development. But the opposite tendencies within the camps were moderated by a few specific factors. First, by the immaturity of the social contradiction that had led to their collision, and the consequent immaturity of the progressive class, its frequent conciliation and accords with part of the old ruling class. Second, by the logic of the ambient conflict, which turned into a brake on social progress at specific stages. At such stages, the conflict deformed the progressive camp and cemented the conservative camp, and caused demoralisation in the society of the countries involved in the conflict, thus affecting both camps.

The conservative camp could by nature differ from the forces which it supported and stimulated in the hostile countries. In the countries concerned, the conservative forces did not necessarily support the conservative camp. They could be antagonised by keen rivalry (competition in trade, scramble for colonies, and the like) and fears for the country's independence and territorial integrity in the event of victory. (Still, the historical destiny of a country depended above all on its place in the ambient conflict.) The attacking side in political terms, the conservative camp was also, as a rule, the attacker in military terms. This depended on the correlation of armed force, on the strategic plans and tactics of each of the

belligerents. The progressive camp, on the other hand, took shape usually for defensive purposes.

The structure of international relations could either expedite an ambient conflict or, conversely, prevent it from arising. The existence of a power that had hegemonic pretensions, for example, was a factor that stimulated the inception of an ambient conflict.

The existence of the conservative camp afforded many advantages to the power that stood at its head. It enabled that power to use the resources of other countries in its own interests which were made to appear identical with those of the camp as a whole. The ideological unity of the conservative camp implied that its members displayed qualities inherent in an ally: unfailing compliance with commitments which were not limited by their size and suited the "absolute aims" (i.e., the complete and final defeat of the adversary) pursued by the camp, and renunciation of alliances that had no such aim. The existence of the conservative camp made it possible to hammer out coalitions for long periods of time and with practically unrestricted tasks, and with an unequal distribution of burdens and gains.

The drive for hegemony of the conservative camp's leading power, a drive exploiting the ambient conflict, is not something extraneously introduced into the ambient conflict. On the contrary, the conflict often became a mere screen for the hegemonic aspirations of the conservative camp's predominant member-state.

As a rule, the conservative camp sought to adjust the political and social system of the countries forming the hostile camp and make it identical with its own. In practice, however, this aim could be confined to either the political aspect or the social aspect. The conservative camp tends to ideologise international relations, that is, to require a greater degree of ideological uniformity as a condition for the maintenance of normal relations between states. Attempts at intervention (not mere interference through commercial, cultural or other contacts, but armed intervention) are impelled by the very substance of the aims

the reactionary side aspires to attain in the ambient conflict.

The partial successes that the conservative camp happened to achieve (both in the 16th and the 19th century) were usually traceable to a temporary but considerable superiority in force, use of social conflicts within the countries of the progressive camp, timidity of the revolutionary forces in tackling the tasks of social rearrangement, or the fear inspired in the new exploiting class, the capitalist class, by its own people.

We might also note the conservative camp's diminishing capability of maintaining the ambient conflict as the new social and economic system makes headway, and the ever more rapid elimination by dint of the historical process of the aftermaths of the successes achieved by the conservative camp. Their adherence to the conservative camp had, in the final count, inevitably harmed the national interests of the countries concerned. It slowed down the rate of their development, leading to loss of their previous role in the system of international relations. The reactionary classes and the political forces representing their interests grew stronger, but they, too, did not benefit from it owing to the prevailing economic decay, the growing lag behind other countries, the visible weakening of the country's international standing, and cultural regression.

The strength of the conservative camp was in no way equal to the aggregate strength of all its members. It could decline even while the latter increased. The fact that the aims of the conservative camp were unattainable, gave added impulse to the centrifugal forces, this often reducing its strength. The loosening of the conservative camp's unity surfaced in various ways, along with an overt withdrawal from it of one country or another. It was a process that led to the emergence of alliance pursuing aims outside the framework of the ambient conflict. Such alliances were concluded with countries of the other camp, especially if these alliances were secret. The centrifugal tendency was likely to lead to attempts by the smaller countries of evading tangible participation in

the conflict, leaving this to the leading powers of the camp, while demanding that the stronger defend the weaker in the event of an enemy threat.

The crisis within the conservative camp could lead to an aggravation of the struggle in individual countries between those who were for and against participation in the ambient conflict, or to attempts by some of the countries to reduce the aims of the coalition to just maintaining the *status quo*, and this by mainly diplomatic means. In other words, these countries sought to maintain the conservative camp, but to cut its claws as a military alliance working for victory in the ambient conflict. The bid of these countries to turn the conservative camp from an offensive into a defensive alliance, altered its essence. For its defensive functions had no tangible meaning, save in exceptional cases when it tried to oppose the victory of the new social and political system in countries party to the alliance. In other words, as long as it retained the function of suppressing the new system in some countries by using the troops of other countries in the alliance. This "protective" function, it is true, was liable to cause a confrontation with the opposite camp and a resumption of the ambient conflict.

Counter-revolutionary interventions are unfailing companions of the ambient conflict. In some ways they are more narrow than the ambient conflict, in others broader. For the ambient conflict can in no way be reduced to mere interventionism, even if the armed contention concerns states with different social systems. Interventionism, on the other hand, which also existed at times when there was no ambient conflict, was often a form of helping a government of the same class against its internal enemies, and did not, therefore, directly represent a struggle of social systems in the field of inter-state relations. But much more frequently, the various tokens of interventionism belong essentially, even completely, to the sphere of the ambient conflict.

Ambient conflicts develop in different ways: a more or less forcible enlistment of other countries in the conservative camp by its leading power, or their voluntary adherence to that camp, or victory of the

new system in particular countries and attempts by the conservative camp at stamping it out. The structure of ambient conflicts, too, was no less diverse. It included direct confrontation between the two camps as a whole, and "local" wars between countries belonging to the two camps. The group of neutral countries, usually fairly large at the beginning of the conflict, tended to shrink to the minimum at the height of the conflict, and then widened once again. That was a sure sign that the ambient conflict was on the wane. The neutral countries were usually of two kinds—those which were different from both the belligerent groups of states in certain political, religious or other terms (e.g., Russia at the time of the conflict between Protestantism and the Counter-Reformation), and those which, though they clearly belonged to one of the camps, were reluctant to join it (Catholic France and Protestant England in the early half of the 16th century). This did not, however, rule out specific conflicts between the neutral countries and some of the participants of the ambient conflict.

A comparative study will show the stages in which an ambient conflict develops, namely, the embryonic period, i.e., attempts of the conservative camp to settle matters by means of a pre-emptive strike, then a period of gathering forces and of consolidation, then a bid to secure victory in a collision of the main forces, and, when this becomes unrealistic, to secure success in the territory of one of the participating countries. These stages may be followed by a second collision at the centre, or by the ending of the ambient conflict. This is no more than a conventional scheme, of course, and some of the stages may overlap or coincide in time, or not occur at all.

The political and ideological "interests" of the ambient conflict became relatively independent in relation to those real class interests, to the national and state interests, that had directly or indirectly generated the ambient conflict or had contributed to its continuance and development. The specificity of the ideology based on world religions enabled the latter, with some alterations, to remain the ideology of several chronologically successive ambient conflicts.

One could ask who the adversary is in an ambient conflict—the country or the ideology? Here one must distinguish between three different things. The first is the degree to which the ambient conflict adequately reflects the class antagonism. The second is how correctly the ambient conflict itself is reflected in the consciousness of its different participants (or groups, or parties into which they are divided). Frequently, some of them are inclined to hyperbolise that side of the conflict in which they (or their country) are directly involved. Finally, the third is the correlation of the conflict's reflection in the minds of its participants and the propaganda that backs up the conflict.

In the ambient conflicts that occurred before the current epoch, the struggle of social systems that lay at their basis did not rise to the surface and was conceived as a collision of political systems or ideological doctrines. In none of those ambient conflicts did the ideology of either side record the existence of the conflict's class basis. It only recorded its reflection in the superstructure. I might add that at the beginning of a conflict even the problems that it created often appeared to be outside its framework. Conversely, at the end of the conflict and for some time after it, matters that clearly lay on some other plane, were still looked upon through the prism of the conflict.

Ambient conflicts do not die by themselves. They run out their course usually as a result of a struggle between those who want the conflict to continue and those who do not—this in the confines of specific countries and in the international arena as a whole. In current times, those in the conservative, imperialist camp who do not want the conflict to continue are the political forces which agree that the principle of peaceful coexistence, a principle consistently promoted by the progressive camp, should be the basis of inter-state relations.

After the attempts at resolving ambient conflicts by force of arms ended, events developed in different ways, depending on the type of the conflict itself. The conflicts within systems were cut short by abrupt changes in the correlation of strength between the camps. The conflicts between different social systems

were more complicated. The confrontation that reached into the sphere of inter-state relations could itself come to diverse ends. Although in the ambient conflicts of the 16th to 19th centuries the old ruling class inevitably departed from the stage of history, the ideology (especially the religious ideology) that "represented" its interests survived and began to reflect the interests of the new predominant exploiting class. As for the ideological contention in inter-state relations, it culminated without fail in the defeat of the conservative camp, which has never succeeded, no matter what methods of struggle it resorted to (first of all, the armed method), to attain its goal in the ambient conflict.

One may get the impression that conflicts between systems were never resolved, and were merely pushed into the background by other conflicts. But that is true only in a certain sense for the conflicts as such, but not for the class struggle that lies behind them. That struggle was never pushed aside, but entered a new, more mature, stage that was differently reflected in the superstructure, including inter-state relations, until it was resolved in a revolutionary way inside each of the countries taking part in the conflict.

It would be a mistake to see the dying of ambient conflicts as a tendency towards a "convergence" of different social systems. And equally wrong to refer the dying of an ambient conflict to the "universalistic political movements eventually exhaust[ing] themselves through their own failures" (as E. Raymond Platig, Director of the Office of Long-Range Assessments and Research, US Department of State, would have us believe in connection with the discussion of the prospects of detente in 1981).¹ Quite the contrary. The dying away of an ambient conflict is clear evidence that the victory of the new system cannot be prevented by resort to arms, and that this victory made it senseless for the new predominant class to continue the old conflict. And since in the

¹ E. Raymond Platig, "Crisis, Pretentious Ideologies and Superpower Behavior", in *Orbis*, Fall 1981, p. 515.

past the new predominant class was also an exploiting class, that victory, as shown by the experience of conflicts in the 16th to 19th centuries, gave it additional cause to seek conciliation with the old exploiting class.

This conciliation, however, did not affect the consolidation of the new social system, which used the old as well as new institutions to suppress the mass of the working people.

When attempts to resolve the previous ambient conflicts by military means stopped, this could not lead to the abolition of wars in general. Wars are an unfailing companion of systems based on the exploitation of man by man—the slave-owning, feudal and capitalist systems. Wars flow from the very nature of the exploiting systems. The distinctions between the social systems that took root in different countries did not, however, by themselves necessarily lead to wars between them. There had always been the alternative of peaceful and non-peaceful relations, and the wars that sprang from distinctions in system were only one of the two possible ways that history could follow. In our time, the growing strength of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries has for the first time in history created a realistic chance of abolishing wars once and for all.

Why is it that the class struggle, which is the motive force of historical progress, becomes an obstacle to the progressive advancement of society once it is transferred to the sphere of inter-state relations in the form of an armed struggle? We will find the answer in that only the reactionary forces stand to gain (and this in only a narrow, short-sighted context) from starting an ambient conflict. For the progressive camp, on the other hand, participation in that conflict amounts to forcibly imposed defence or to a distinct failure to comprehend its own interests, even if for justifiable social reasons. (Recall the armed contention of revolutionary France with the feudal authoritarian states of Europe, and later also with bourgeois England, inspired and loosened by the Girondins.) In sum, ambient conflicts come under the head of “over-

head expenses" in the process of history, for they have at no time been unavoidable. This objective role of ambient conflicts has had the effect of slowing down history, and exercised what was by and large a negative influence on science and culture and, especially, on social thinking.

The ending of an ambient conflict made it possible for the English revolution to make headway in the 17th century. The absence of an ambient conflict created favourable international conditions for the triumph of the American revolution. On the whole, the same conditions arose, and for the same reasons, in the early stages of the Great French Revolution. The historically negative role of ambient conflicts is seen distinctly when contrasted by social revolutions, those crucial progressive events in world history. It is apparent that the crisis of the ideology and culture of the Renaissance not only coincided with the outbreak of an ambient conflict, but was also largely generated by that conflict. And, conversely, the first signs of the Enlightenment appeared and became possible only when residual tokens of an ambient conflict had begun to disappear.

The spread of the struggle of diverse social systems to the sphere of inter-state relations in the form of an armed confrontation has never led to the victory of one of the contending camps, and inevitably became a most serious barrier to social progress.

History refutes the claims of modern-day reactionary historians and social scientists who try to justify the political aspirations of the imperialist hawks and say that ambient conflicts helped stabilise international relations because they led to an internal consolidation of the belligerent blocs. On the contrary. Any aggravation of ambient conflicts and attempts at settling them by resort to arms ruled out stability of the international system, while renunciation of armed methods, though it did not mean stability by itself, helped to pave the way for it.

The experience of history shows that when ambient conflicts ended, favourable conditions appeared for more speedy social progress, and premises were created for the development of the class struggle in the

framework of individual countries (since we refer to countries with antagonistic classes) free from outside interference (by the leading power of the conservative camp). The ending of ambient conflicts has always objectively worked in the interests of the countries concerned, both those of the progressive and those of the conservative camp.

A study of the lessons of world history offers a clearer, more profound understanding of the scientific pillars of Soviet foreign policy which reposes on knowledge of the true laws of social progress. Soviet foreign policy is based on a profound and thorough appreciation of current developments in the world and of the many past centuries. Past experience sets off in bold relief the lofty historic motivations of the Soviet Union's struggle for the Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence. Socialism rejects war as an instrument for spreading the new system. It asserts its superiority over the old system by a higher form of society and state, by economic uplift and uplift in the standard of living and the cultural standard of the mass of the people.

The principles of Leninist foreign policy are recorded in the Constitution of the Soviet Union, whose Article 28 says that "the USSR steadfastly pursues a Leninist policy of peace and stands for strengthening of the security of nations and broad international cooperation".

The Soviet policy of peace reposes on the objective laws governing social progress, on the inexorable march of history. It demonstrates the lofty humanitarian spirit of the Soviet Union's efforts to promote peaceful coexistence. Attempts at resolving the conflict between the opposite social systems by resort to arms must and will be banished from the life of society. This will be an important step in the succession of historic constructive achievements furthering the triumph of the new world, a world free of ambient conflicts, and bringing closer the radiant future of all nations.

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This book is the first study ever made of ambient conflicts in world history, that is, conflicts which dragged out over centuries of confrontation in the sphere of relations between states with different social systems.

The book may be recommended as a highly academic study and an original form of analysis abounding in descriptions of historical episodes and thumbnail portrayals of historical figures.